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The Island Cure

Grace Blanchard

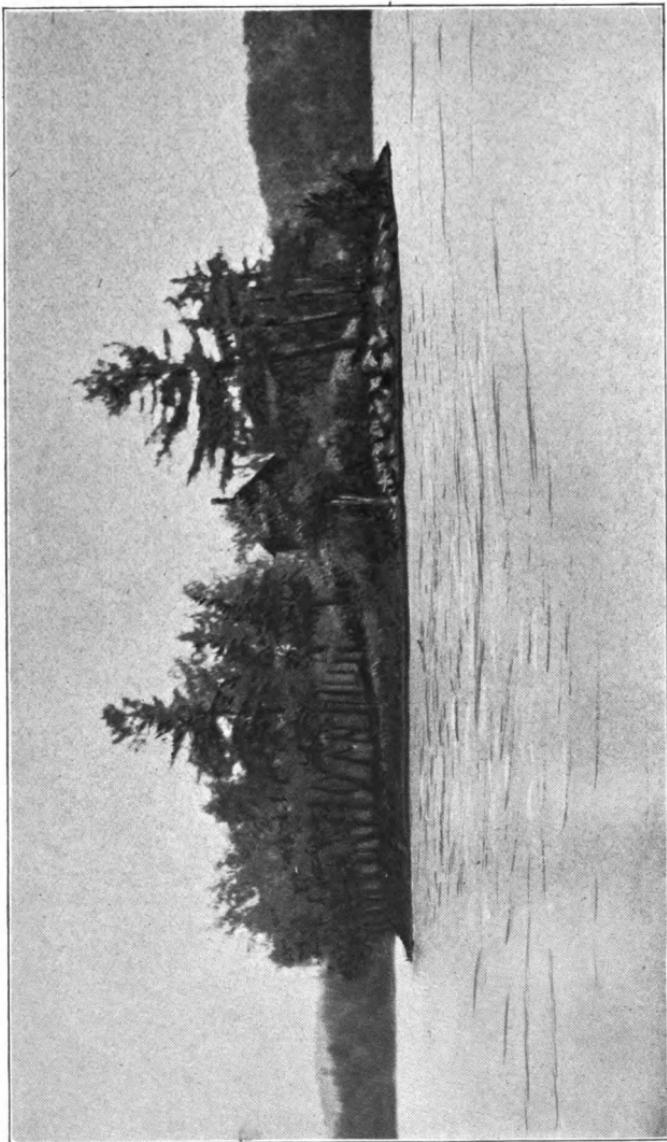
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To the Armed Forces and Merchant Marine

5422

THE ISLAND CURE

THE ISLAND OF THEIR HEART'S DESIRE.—*Page 189.*



THE ISLAND CURE

By
GRACE BLANCHARD

ILLUSTRATED



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To
T H O S E
*who have made my own outings
on these islands delightful*

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The Island Cure

CHAPTER I

“**Y**ES, it’s a pretty enough dress, but it doesn’t give the 1922 silhouette, Marianna, and if anybody noticed the waistline —”

“ Nobody would, with you to be noticed instead, goosie. You are the ‘jool’; why worry about the setting? ”

“ Jewels are getting very fussy these days, Marie. An engagement solitaire cries for a platinum mounting, and then when the wedding comes, the bride’s hand will not look well if the old-fashioned band of gold is used; and so, what with the high cost of rings and things, we spinsters multiply on the face of the earth.”

It was always amusing when Jean Beverley fretted; it was obviously such hard work for her to be disagreeable.

Her bearing usually suggested a dainty aloofness to everything and everybody petty, and an almost imperceptible hesitation in her speech accorded with the dreamy manner from which her friends loved to rouse her, in order to see her glow as if lit from within by ardors and kindled feelings. She made the continuous vivacity of other girls seem ordinary. On this hot June afternoon, however, in the Auxiliary rooms, alone with Marianna White, she was letting herself run on whimsically.

“ Let’s see—have we got all the pieces sorted and counted for the Chinese Relief box? No, here is a set of hygienic garments; as if those Celestials living on rice and rafts cared! Now it is ready for shipping.”

“ Lay the directions on top, then, and the janitor will do the rest. We can lock up the office and leave. Heavens, dear! Aren’t you glad we volunteered for spring work and are free now for the summer? ”

"But I can't go anywhere, Marie; my clothes are ante-bellum curiosities. Why! this hat is positively heavy with the coats of colorite it has received."

"Well, that's a charming old blue you have on it now, Jean; it exactly matches your eyes."

"You are color blind, Marie, for they are green with envy. As for clothes, if I had the outers and undies I want, I would accept some invitations, but as it is, I am fit for nothing but a desert isle."

"Get up a new wardrobe, then. You are capable of it. Didn't everybody copy your smocks?"

"Too poor to buy material, and too tired to make it up. Besides, I've lost my artistic sense; I have handled refugee infants' wear, cut from discarded pajamas and flannel pettis till I can no longer shut my eyes and visualize anything smart—and that's the way I have to go about my dressmaking—see the whole creation before I put a stitch into it. Shoes, too!"

If only I knew enough to earn my living dancing in Greek sandals, and so could avoid the high cost of boots—but being one of the few remaining untrained damsels in the world, you know I do first one thing and then another to earn the wherewithal; and I tell you again, Marianna, it is sneakers and solitude for me, these next weeks.”

They were descending the stairs leading from the Post-War Activities Bureau, and upon emerging on the street passed along about their errands, being greeted beamingly by dozens of persons to whom these two attractive young women were a most refreshing sight on a sultry day. Jean Beverley’s bows grew steadily less cordial and at her lodging-house door she said wearily:

“ Go on to your home and family, Merry Sunshine. I’m glad I am an orphan child and can go to my room and sulk. I’m tired of smiling up one side of Main Street and down the other.”

"Your nerves are as worn as your clothes, Jean; that's what's the matter. You have been putting in a year's work in four months' time. You spoke in jest about going to an island, but why don't you do it in earnest? They are the rest-fulest things—no chance for anything there *but* rest. I know, for don't I always relax and untwist and generally let myself down on our islet in Squam Lake after a hectic July and August? Let me prescribe for that tired feeling, Jean, honey. Do the islands along the coast, and then visit us over Labor Day and tell about their different charms."

Being in no mood to promise anything requiring action, for answer Miss Beverley side-stepped from a crawling caterpillar, and casting a rueful eye at the path dreary with leaves ruined by the elm-tree beetle and at steps horrid with dangling brown-tails, she fled up to the front door and inserted the joyless key of the lady boarder.

The supper also failed to cheer; the iced tea which looked good proved bitter; and a dish which, had it cooked long enough, might have been something réchaufféed, tasted like a warm salad. The meal had a perversely inspiriting effect, however, and later when Miss Beverley was wanted at the telephone, it was a revolutionary Jean who replied:

“Thank you, Dr. White, ever so much. It is like Marianna to remember I needed chirking up, and it would be lovely to have a ride, but I am packing to go away early to-morrow. Please say to Marie that I am going to act on her advice and seek health and happiness on the nearest island—that would be one of the Shoals, wouldn’t it? Tell her I am now doing up my wardrobe to go by parcel post; I’ll insure it for a hundred dollars and then I hope it will get lost, so I can buy a new dress; Marie will understand that if you don’t. Oh-h, are you trying to chide me for working my Government? Why,

Papa White," and Jean's eyes, over the receiver's rim, looked wondering and innocent, "are you men going to force the civic virtues on to us women in addition to all those we come by naturally? Bid good-bye to all the dear Whites for me. Marie shall have a letter after I get rested."

The south-bound 7:07 electric car had as a passenger the following morning a young woman whose appearance caused masculine eyes to glance up from the newspapers. This was a distinct tribute to Miss Beverley, for the headlines were portentous. **STRIKES! STRIKES!** everywhere. Everything tied up, everybody deserving to be strung up. Jean glanced at a six-inch caption: "Bay State Motor-men Demand Increase!" then, not realizing that the matter might affect her, she gazed out at the fields and away down the rippling, shining river and rejoiced that she was at last foot-loose and free, to put it poetically.

There was no poetry about the situation by nine o'clock, however. It was a prosy fact that beyond Lawrence not a trolley-line was being operated and that men and women leaving electric cars were faced by the alternatives of walking or waiting. A large number of those who alighted with Miss Beverley hurried off in varying directions as if aware where they could find other means of transportation. She paused on the sidewalk, puzzled. "If a jitney comes along, I suppose I shall have to hire it; he probably will ask so much that he might as well say, 'Your money or your life.' There's the highwayman now."

It was not labelled PUBLIC, the car which slowed up beside the curbstone where pretty Jean stood; perhaps it had been pressed into service too suddenly to acquire such a sign. Its driver, who somewhere in France had observed the "down but never out" bearing of his regiment, noticed that the young lady ap-

peared perplexed but not drooping—a nice distinction. He recognized in her a gallant spirit; but she evidently needed something, somebody.

That was enough for Chandler Webb. “Can I help you out?” he asked.

It was impossible to criticize his manner. “‘A very parfit, gentil knight,’” quoted Jean to herself quickly. “If you will be kind enough to tell me how I can get farther on my way to Portsmouth? It is too late for the morning train to pick me up here and —”

“My route lies in that direction,” the man at the wheel said; “I was thinking it was too bad I could not get a customer this tied-up morning.”

“Um-m-m—of course—robber,” soliloquized Jean; but she could do no better than to remark aloud in her most business-like tone, “To the nearest electric line, then, please.”

The personable male person appraised her slim daintiness. “You will bounce—

I mean sway, in the tonneau. Better sit in here," and he swung open the door to the front seat beside himself.

First of all, Jean Beverley was a lady; next, she was a mischievous young lady; and not so many years before, she had been a girl whose familiar name among her mates had been The Lark.

She got in.

Much of their way lay through sun-flecked woods where bird notes replaced clangng bells and where roadside flowers cried out to be taken up and petted. "I suppose that for to-day's big patronage he has grafted on to his car a regular taximeter," Jean reflected, "and if I asked him to stop while I got those wild lilies it would add to my bill; but I should like to study that color at close range, for in the next batik work I do I want to get in just that shade of dye."

As if he guessed from the turning of her head and her involuntary gesture what she wished, her companion checked

his speed and inquired, "Would you like a bunch? Gorgeous as Woolsey's robe when played by Beerbohm Tree, aren't they?"

"Thanks be! that shows he knows something besides moving pictures!" breathed Jean to herself; and because she had lonesomely felt herself the sole surviving admirer of the legitimate drama, she warmed now to the topic of the traditional theatre and to a discussion of its forlorn hope for the coming winter.

The man meanwhile had an undercurrent in his own thoughts. He noticed the speedometer. "Twenty-nine miles, and all I have learned is that she is not a film actress and has no desire to be one. I may as well take her the whole distance. She seems mighty nice. If you have no objection," he continued aloud, "I will make a detour here to get a friend, in fact, a relative, who happened to say to me that he had to go to Portsmouth today. Then I will run you both over

there. Are you due at any special time?"

"By all means call for the other passenger," Miss Beverley replied graciously. "It will be all right for me if I catch the Shoals boat."

He gave her a doubly interested glance. "That is what Denning will want to catch. He is some sort of a parson—indeed, I am told he is a parson of sorts, and he has to speak at those meetings there, you know."

She stiffened in what he feared might be compunction at the lessening of restraint in their conversation but which was not so much that as a tinge of anxiety. Having had no family with whom it was necessary to arrange outings, she had been accustomed to start off in light travelling trim when the spirit prompted, and she had always found hotel accommodations; but now —

"I had not thought—I didn't remember," she murmured; "but it is the week

of the Conference on Star, isn't it? I do not wish to change my destination for I need to go to an island to rest;" she brought this out with great firmness of tone really meant to bolster up her own sudden misgivings as to her plan; "but I haven't any objection to religion," she added still more firmly.

"No—of course not; anyway, you could not object to Tom Denning's; it is too ——" He hesitated and she supplied:

"Negligible?"

"Good Lord, no!—big as all outdoors."

He might have said, "Big as the man himself," for when the car drew up in Exeter before one of its fine old houses, a six by three specimen of muscular Christianity came forth at the insistent tooting of the automobile's horn, and a correspondingly sizable voice called:

"Cousin Chan, by all that's lucky! and apparently headed toward Old River-mouth. May I hang on behind?"

Webb laughed. "And tip the machine over backward? Not much. But run get your sermon and I will take you along to make your pulpit appointment. Trolley lines would fail you if you trusted to them to-day; they went back on this young lady;" and in lieu of knowing her name to mention in an introduction, he bowed toward Jean with a charming courtesy which she would have been dense indeed not to realize and respond to.

"I am Miss Beverley;" she addressed the clergyman, who gave a kindly nod and strode away saying, "I will go for my grip; Emily is away, but she leaves it packed ready for me. But my sermon, young man, my sermon is here," and he smote his head and heart.

"I should like to hear him preach," Jean said pleasantly. "He seems so—so—broad."

"Yes, Thomas is not narrow;" and then as the literal interpretation of the

remark struck them they had their first laugh together.

"I have always thought I should like to hear him, too, but it has never been quite feasible. Guess this is my opportunity. I can leave my car in a Portsmouth garage and come over on the early Sunday boat in time for his service. Don't tell him, however, that I intend to be in his congregation, for he would not be human if he did not take for his text, 'Bear ye one another's burdens' and illustrate it by covert references which I should understand, to pranks played when we were boys and he took the brunt of the blame, though doubtless I had been the ring-leader in the mischief."

This is not the place to stop and discuss whether Jean Beverley knew what an adorable trick her eyes had of opening in wonderment; they certainly widened and grew bluer and even danced a little at this moment as she turned toward him, and though she did not really speak the words,

she seemed to be asking, "*Were you naughty?*"

And as if he were used to reading sweet lips Webb guessed the inaudible question and pursed his own mouth to form in reply, "Yes, very."

Then again they laughed, the good-to-hear laughter of grown-ups who have done their bit and who now find themselves on the eve of a holiday—adventuring.

CHAPTER II

WHEN Jean Beverley set her mind on a thing, she kept it there. Steadfastness was a trait of her. She had said she was going to the Shoals, ergo: here she was. Like Lady Macbeth, she would have cried accusingly to the vacillating, "Infirm of purpose!" There was no suggestion of deadliness about her appearance, however, and the nearest approach to a dagger was the long, jewelled tortoise-shell pin which, stuck into her bright hair, caught the morning light as she hurried to reach the dining-room door before they closed it for breakfast.

Being alone, she was trying not to look too friendlily inclined to the world, but really she had reason to congratulate herself upon being where she was, this humid

Sunday morning. For, on the night previous, even before she actually reached the hotel, it was plainly evident that the large structure was crowded with people in attendance at the Conference. She had made her application at the desk with trepidation and the clerk's reply, "Sorry, madam, but every room is engaged," had fallen upon not altogether unprepared ears. "Did you write ahead?"

Now Miss Jean Beverley had already taken a predilection for the place and people, the former made boldly interesting by nature and now given a softening charm by the presence of the latter who seemed worth-while folk; superior, Jean felt sure, to the cut of a coat and the width of a skirt. Therefore she sought time in her reply to the clerk, beginning it with a reluctant, "No-o." Something more was necessary to influence him and she might have uttered what seemed to her tiredly chaotic thoughts as a reason for letting her remain, namely, "I came to

the island to rest," had not the Rev. Mr. Denning, waiting behind her to step up and register, comprehended her difficulty and made a timely interruption: "The young lady is in my party."

"Ah, Mr. Denning,—certainly. Now that I think of it again, perhaps we can give her a cot in a cottage."

He did not mean to be funny but he was, and amusement curved the waiting lady's lips, but she managed to transfuse hastily that expression with one which led the harassed clerk to feel she was sorrier for him than for herself; the result was easily predictable: she was assigned a place to lay her head.

Near her there in the office, the bulletin-board announced all sorts of doings for that Saturday night. In the old, old days at Star Island, hops had occurred at which languid beauties outdressed one another, waltzed to the "Beautiful Blue Danube," and flirted in dusky corners of the big piazzas. This night, their descendants,

jolly college girls and women who despite gray hairs remained good sports, were readily finding their prey under the electric lights and were commandeering alike waitresses or notables as needed, for the success of a charade, a stunt or a sing.

An air of good fellowship reigned which almost caught Jean in its current, but after a grateful glance at Rev. Thomas Denning already surrounded by committees and reporters, she had been more than willing to follow the bell-boy out along a plank walk and up to a top-story room which though tiny was hers, all hers, shared only by the moonlight and the blessed salty breeze.

Therefore, because of that good rest which she fondly believed was a foretaste of the coming weeks, it was a smiling morning face she presented at the breakfast table. Postal authorities had not yet delayed or mislaid her wardrobe-parcel and from it she had taken fresh things which looked no more wrinkled than

everybody else's clothes. "Why iron one minute, to crease the next?" was evidently the slogan of that sensible feminine company.

That she was late in appearing down-stairs was only to be expected the first morning after coming to sea-level and to the resultant blissful drowsiness which makes one almost sleep all round the clock. She made no advance toward acquaintance in the brief time which remained between pushing away her finger-bowl and hearing the whistle of the morning boat. She had been listening intently for that, for she realized too late, after she had hurried on the previous afternoon from the motor to the *Sightseer*, that she had forgotten to pay the automobile fare.

"It was his fault," she inwardly fumed; "he made it seem, toward the end, just like a ride with a friend." Chagrined, however, and determined to make amends as speedily as possible for her business lapse, she hastened to the wharf and stood

there with her purse conspicuous in her hand as the steamer puffed in.

Yes, there was Mr. Webb already at the gangplank—he had declared he would not let business interfere with pleasure, and there was his outstretched hand. She could not baldly thrust money into it. He kept beside her on the board walk between rows of gorgeously colored satiny poppies up to the hotel, and at its lowest step she nervously detained him.

“I am quite mortified I forgot to settle yesterday. Please tell me how much I owe you for my fortunate jitney trip.”

His face fell; even so does a landscape change when the sun goes in; and he shot her a humorously perplexed look. “Nothing, absolutely nothing; there’s no indebtedness on your part—er—that is, Cousin Tom Denning would say it would be acting on an unchristian doctrine, to make your necessity my opportunity. Really, I can’t——” And he fanned himself with his hat as if suddenly hot.

"Put it in the contribution box; whatever innovations they have introduced into camp-meetings-de-luxe like this, I feel sure they retain that. Do you know, I once went to a church affair where the printer had put on the program, 'Collection,' when it should have been 'Collation.' Fact! The people swallowed his apology all right. Now after I check my over-coat, shall we go listen to Cousin Thomas?" And having shunted her intended financial transaction to one side, he sprang up the steps leaving Jean finger-gering an undepleted purse.

Into the audience hall were quietly streaming old and young, to a rare church meeting where all attended because they really wished to. Webb and Miss Beverley had to look keenly before they spied a vacant settee; and because they were rather self-conscious they scarcely sensed the service until they heard a first hymn given out—Whittier's—and the congregation soared into the beautiful verse:

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care;"

Jean's voice seeming the most reverent and sweet of all.

Chandler Webb beside her wished he could do something to show how he felt. He might bow his head—yes, that was what he would do even if it was only his cousin praying—old Tom was in earnest—and he would put in a big bill. Jean, as she dropped in her quarter, saw the crisp greenback embarrassingly rear its large head and she felt perturbed. Had she mistaken a prince for a chauffeur?

Mundane worries slipped away, however, as Thomas Denning stepped forward on the platform and said simply, "That's my text—'We cannot drift beyond His love and care.' "

Uplifting and heartening his hearers he proceeded, and the morning concluded with people disbanding in that hushed en-

thusiasm which follows a fine service. The dinner-gong brought all down to earth again, however, glad to order all the cooling things on the menu, and, because of the increasing sultriness of the atmosphere, ready to devise a way to secure a comfortable afternoon.

Webb, on one side of Miss Beverley, leaned across to speak to his reverend cousin at the head of the table.

"To be out on the water would be the best thing, Thomas. You and I used to be some yachtsmen. I'll see if I can find a boat. You will trust yourself to anything I'll get?" and now he included Jean in his look and question.

She colored a little and seemed thus to give a tacit assent, but pending her answer a purring voice farther down the table said fatuously, "I couldn't help overhearing that lovely plan, Dr. Denning. What time ought we to be ready?"

"O Lord! the whole harem!" muttered Webb aside. "No,—it's rotten of

me to say that; I mean the whole Sunday school. Well," with forced cheerfulness, "three sharp we'll call it, eh, Doctor? It will be the silly ones who will go," in continued sotto voce protest.

"Thanks awfully," Jean flashed him mockingly.

"Oh, you know that did not include you. You will save the situation," he added frankly.

The sky had grown a trifle threatening by the appointed hour, but the group of women gathered in ample season on the pier were not sufficiently nautical to have any timidity lessen their eagerness. All those who were not young chorused, "We will be good girls if you will only take us;" and the few real juveniles, held by their mothers' hands, looked to that nice, kind gentleman to save them from a Sabbath lull in entertainment.

"All aboard!" he was now heard calling. "Round the islands, is it, Tom?"

A favoring wind rewarded their ven-

ture at once, and if it freshened by fits and starts as they came abreast of White Island not one except the two men noticed it. It was when they cleared all sheltering land and reached the open sea to the east of the Shoals that gusts came making the boat careen, the boom swing, and necessitating a quick reefing of sails. It brought realization to all the passengers; and was it only the lurid light now appearing in the sky which changed their sunburned faces from red to white?

"I'm not afraid; I'm only seasick," one woman confided to Jean; the latter glanced up to see if Chandler Webb had heard this attempt to camouflage one misery by another, and the tense look on his face riveted her attention. Out of the cloud-racked sky a thunder-storm accompanying a violent summer squall was really upon them and in a moment Webb called, above the swish of wind and wave:

"It's a time to keep quiet, ladies.

Stop—don't move! Don't you know the eleventh commandment says, 'Thou shalt not change seats in a canoe'? and this is about as skitterish," he added mentally.

"Stay still!" he shouted after a few more anxious minutes. "No matter if you do get drenched. O damn!"

A comber rolling in had canted the yacht badly, and those sitting on the side which dipped down, down, even into the water, rose affrightedly to their feet, bent on getting to higher and drier seats. A child began to cry.

"Here!" Webb drew a revolver from his pocket and passed it to Jean Beverley. "You look as if you could stay level-headed. This boat must stay trimmed. Now, if they start to stampede from one side to the other, shoot!" This he meant that all should hear. "Stand up and hug the mast tight and then if the thing goes off, it will fire over their heads," he said into Jean's ear. "It may not be loaded, but I rather think I put a bead in the

other day after the Lawrence strike let loose."

"That's the stuff!" he called encouragingly a little later, as the yacht rounded Appledore and began to get the benefit of a lee shore. "Thomas, you ought to be made a chaplain in the navy for this afternoon's distinguished service. Here we are at the wharf in season for supper — Oh, my dear madam, that *was* a thoughtless remark"; this to the one who looked green as well as pale. "Wait for me," he begged of Jean. "We are both so wet we ought to hurry into dry clothes, but I want to delay you long enough to tell you I never saw anybody hold a pistol and look so pleasant about it. How did you manage it, Miss Beverley?"

"Why—I had to. The poor things were so frightened. If you were disciplining them, I had to encourage them."

He held out his hand, and his close clasp was like the conferring of a decoration upon her, Jean thought; but in spite

of elation of spirit she began to feel the strain of the afternoon's experience and turned toward the path leading to her cottage room. Several others leaving the yacht passed by and the voice which at the dinner table had purred now sounded as if its owner had been stroked the wrong way, for in unlowered and indignant tone it was observing:

"I think that Webb is a dangerous man, to be around inviting ladies to go out and get drowned."

Jean's eyes flashed resentfully in his behalf, but Chandler merely raised his brows quizzically and, fumbling in his soaked pocket, exhibited his wet pipe ruefully to Dr. Denning, who had been making fast the sailboat that had proved itself staunch enough when rightly managed.

"Cousin Tom, on the strength of your reputation I am going to borrow a coat of the hotel clerk, but first I'll ask him for dry baccy. And may I make free of your

sleeping quarters till to-morrow? Of course the steamer has gone back to Portsmouth while we have been prolonging our little pleasure excursion. Say, Thomas, how do you ministers get your nervous systems in order after an escapade like this? You might lock yourself into the bowling alley and roll a string, for the thunder is not all over and you would never be suspected of making the racket. Miss Beverley, how about you? You know you came here to rest."

They exchanged an amused glance at the irony of his remark, then Jean replied:

"I am going to do nothing from now on until it is time for the evening service. I want to attend that surely, for it is held by candlelight in the small stone building, and I have heard no one should miss it. Look! that certainly is the smoke from the steamer over to our right. It is too bad you have lost the boat."

Her words were conventional but her tone provocative. He might have coun-

tered with a teasing, "Is it?" but apparently he was no longer in joking mood. In silence he looked at her, his eyes darkening with unexpressed feeling from gray to black, and they said, "But I have you."

By the end of the afternoon the storm was over, and the hotel guests, through with their last meal, were dotting Star Island by scores, watching the Great Artist spread his palette in the west and turning every now and then to watch His bow of promise spanning the eastern sky.

Jean Beverley having had a supper-tray brought to her room had got outdoors earlier than had the others and had selected a place shaped like a stony arm-chair from which to observe the fading of the wondrous arch. Dusk was coming, and the seeking man who was climbing the rocks had to peer often into the wrong face before he found Jean herself and reminded her that it was almost the evening service hour.

“Wait!” and as she made no move to rise and seemed loath to break the spell, he quietly sat down near her and soon, in a still small voice as if she hesitated to bare her thoughts, she began to say Celia Thaxter’s homesick “Landlocked,” which begins:

“Black lie the hills; swiftly doth daylight flee,
And catching gleams of sunset’s dying smile,
Through the dusk land for many a changing
 mile
The river runneth softly to the sea ——”

then urges the rich fullness of life on shore, and ends with an unconvinced yearning for the ocean:

“Neither am I ungrateful:—but I dream
Deliciously, how twilight falls to-night
Over the glimmering water, how the light
Dies blissfully away, until I seem

To feel the wind sea-scented on my cheek,
To catch the sound of dusky flapping sail
And dip of oars, and voices on the gale
Afar off, calling low;—my name they speak!

O Earth! thy summer song of joy may soar
Ringing to heaven in triumph. I but crave
The sad, caressing murmur of the wave
That breaks in tender music on the shore.”

Then the woman was afraid the man would say something banal, or would laugh, or would in some way disappoint her; but his hearty “Amen!” preserved to her the feeling that there was a spiritual kinship between them and the conviction that he spoke her language.

And just as he had been willing to fall in with her poetic mood, she was ready to obey his practical:

“Come, let us get our lanterns. I hear there are not enough to go round. Marauders during the war made way with all but about a dozen out of the one hundred stored here. Cousin Thomas is on the program again to-night. It’s his day evidently—and ours, I’m thinking,” he ventured under cover of the darkness.

One by one, or better, two by two, shadowy forms were now stepping up to

the corner of the hotel veranda lit by the candles placed ready for outstretched arms. The stars were coming out sociably, not envious of the little human Milky Way made by the devout procession whose windings were outlined by the lighted tapers in the lanterns swinging gently from their hands.

Webb and Miss Beverley slipped into seats in the quaint old Gosport church near the door, "in case we want to leave," he whispered.

Ah! no one ever wanted to cut short those vespers! Hymn and silent prayer and dusk and the sound of surf. A few words uttered; many things felt which were too deep for words. Coming away in the holy quiet of that hour Chandler and Jean scarcely spoke, but before they encountered the glare of the Oceanic office, she said:

"That alone was worth coming for."

"Yes," he answered gravely.

Then, as the general interchange of

bedtime salutations reminded them the hour was late, she turned toward her cottage and he walked beside her, guarding where the earth at the side of the planks fell abruptly away.

“Now you are at home safely. Do you like it well enough to stay on here, Miss Beverley?”

“It’s a rare spot, but not—not tranquillizing in some of its episodes—and you know my quest is for rest. Anyway, I am pledged to islands in the plural; and I am thinking I may sample Orr’s next.”

“Try the one this side, Bailey’s, where my sister has a little place. Well, I shall find myself locked out by the Reverend Thomas if I do not turn back to the hotel. No—don’t be—a—goose; you know this is not really good-bye.”

A cordial shake, a reaching up of his hand to lift his hat and then, when he realized he had gone bare-headed to the service, a gallant change of the gesture to a military salute, and then Jean was left



OLD GOSPORT CHURCH ON STAR ISLAND.

alone to mount the stairs and to muse as she undressed:

“He’s unconventional—but genuine. What a day! I wonder if it is true—what George Laird said in ‘Saint’s Progress’: ‘Life’s going to be the important thing in the future, Nollie; not comfort and cloistered virtue and security; but *living* and pressure to the square inch. Regrets and repinings and repressions are going out of fashion.’ That’s rather a fearsome doctrine, Mr. Galsworthy; I’d rather put myself to sleep repeating:

‘I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air.’ ”

CHAPTER III

“YOU are not leaving this morning?” Jean Beverley questioned, rather idly, perhaps, for the Rev. Thomas Denning as he joined her on the wharf was not wearing conventional attire but a soft shirt and a broad Panama. He cast a glance at her veil and gloves. “But you are. No, no! I am going to stay on so as to have the pleasure of being preached to. Well, you will have a fine afternoon for your trip. It was rather dark and foggy when Chandler rustled round this morning, trying to get off without disturbing me.”

“He did not care to remain?” Jean asked, not quite so casually this time.

“Couldn’t. Had his business to think of.”

“The jitney, to be sure. I saw that

this morning's paper reminded drivers of such vehicles to pay their license fees."

If she spoke artfully with intent to gather information regarding Mr. Webb's real status in life, she got no satisfaction from the reply which was merely a chuckling, "Guess that would not phase him. Did I hear him say you were bound for Casco Bay? His sister, Mrs. Vining, has quite a place on Bailey. Hope you will run across her; always liked Cousin Marcia, though she makes me feel by comparison a mere cumberer of the ground. Sorry you are going. You won't find any better place than this."

"I believe you. If I get such a wrench in my feelings every time I leave an island, I shall regret I promised a friend to make a comparative study of them."

She had almost to shout this rather than speak it, for she had passed aboard the steamer and stood amid a thud of coiling ropes and a clank of unrolling chains. The task of starting and turning the boat

accomplished, however, only a swish of sound remained to please Jean's ear as she found herself again afloat between a blue ocean and a bluer sky.

She did not allow the few intervening hours on the railroad to give a dry character to the journey she preferred to think of as a wet one. Portland also was no check to her peace of mind, for its station, although a big point of arrival and departure, manages not to seem unnecessarily complicated, and the transfer from it to the wharf was easily made, the city not yet being in the transportation plights of rioting manufacturing centres. It had been a bit depressing to leave the sure charm of the Shoals for an untried island, but now when the unmistakable whiff from another harbor-side greeted her, her spirits returned and she sought the *Merriconeag* with rising interest.

Late afternoon's magic of light and shade lay over the dotted bay. She had been told she could purchase her ticket on

the boat as well as at the office on the wharf and therefore she had waited for what is known as a "leading" before buying it. Now, after those persons had subsided who always begin by sitting in the bow, find it too windy and come clattering with their camp-stools across one's line of vision; and after the children playing hide-and-seek had had enough of romping with one another and of bumping into their elders, Jean Beverley's enthusiasm grew.

"I can't get enough of this," she exclaimed to herself. "I wonder what the expression on the purser's face would be if I asked for passage to 'Ultima Thule—utmost isle.' Probably I better say in plain English that I should like to go as far as the boat does."

And as a matter of fact, that is precisely the route she did take; when the *Merriconeag* paused at Bailey's she had an impulse to land there, but she reasoned it away, reflecting that on the morrow she

could go back to that island and concluding, "I will keep on to the limit allowed by my ticket; for to-night, Orr's is all right. This delicious air has made me so drowsy that if I can get a place where I can drop off at once, it will be all I ask."

A hotel within a stone's throw of the landing loomed in the fading light, seemingly large enough to accommodate one more transient guest, and she was surprised to be given, as on the island of Conferences, a remote room. "The week-enders have filled me up," the landlord explained, and Miss Beverley thereupon registered meekly, too sleepy to press a point or to look up another lodging place, though she felt that by morning she would seek board where she did not, as here, smell gasoline quite as strongly as seaweed. Peering from her dormer window she saw garages here and there.

"I remember the Captain said this was no longer a real island, since having had a kind of breakwater road built over to the

mainland. Evidently some of the people who rusticate here do not wish their bridges burned behind them to Poland Springs; they are not keen enough for the simple life to want to exchange headlights for beacon lights, that is, not altogether —” And here Jean’s heavy eyelids refused to stay open longer.

The next thing she was conscious of, a man was unlocking her door—noisily, therefore not a burglar;—in agitation, therefore not a villain; and before the occupant of the room could make a third guess, he had shouted through the gloom:

“ Oil tank’s on fire. Garage is burning and hotel has caught. Get up and go down-stairs while you can.”

Miss Beverley threw on her raincoat, caught up her Burleson trunk, as she called the pasteboard box which was to answer instead of weighty luggage on her travels, and hastened to the first floor. All the space there was filled with excited

men and women. Jean saw one punctiliously leaving her key at the office, and heard another complaining that the mosquito-netting in her screen must be mended at once.

The manager and the clerk were begging all those who had got their valuables with them to clear out and leave less of a human welter indoors.

Jean felt of her hand-bag. Yes, there was her purse and there was the little jewelry she had taken from home; she could move on into the yard.

There was no fire company to fight the flames but the hotel owned some hose, and with this and with buckets passed from hand to hand employees and volunteers were striving to wet down the building from attic to basement. Jean gazed up to the window out of which she had looked for her good-night view. A ladder reached to it now, and a dark figure standing thereon and holding a chemical extinguisher was releasing fluid calculated

to allay progress of the blaze in that quarter.

Suddenly Jean remembered what she had left there to be ruined. Her travelling dress! Her most necessary raiment! What were the white skirt, the smart new one-piece gingham, and the georgette blouse in the box she was clutching compared with what she had forgotten?

She did not realize she spoke aloud, but in her dismay she must have fairly shouted, "Oh, don't spoil my suit!" for a boyish voice answered without ceremony and in evident enjoyment of the general excitement:

"Oh, no, he won't, ma'am, because he's done it already. Gee! this fire makes up for the safe and sane Fourth they've wished on to us fellers. All the big bugs are coming over from the other islands to see the fun. There's Mrs. Cabot Vining from Bailey's."

Jean Beverley turned her back in vexation upon the annoying youngster and

faced a lady hurrying up from her motor-launch and directing her engineer in the manner of one bidding a chauffeur wait. Jean got an instant impression that here was somebody immensely capable, and, from the first words she spoke, immensely friendly also. Mrs. Vining's acquaintances said of her that she was the exception which proved the rule as regards the adage that nobody can do two things at the same time and do them well. "She's either executive or bossy, according to whether you like her or not," they opined. She was happiest when helpful, she liked to be appointed a Committee of One, and she objected to the rising tide of socialism, not for theoretical reasons, but because an equal distribution of wealth would put an end to her dearest activities, which were philanthropic.

Now she saw instantly that the irritated young lady was in a plight and at once she asked in such a sympathetic way that it lessened the tension in Jean's face:

"Are you one of the evicted? Then you are to go right home with me in my boat. I have room enough and everything to make you comfortable, my dear. No, don't say a word in protest; it does me good to feel useful in summer. In winter I live in New York with four million neighbors and there is usually something to do for them, but on Bailey I have almost to create a need in order to minister to it. There—follow me—I wouldn't look at the hotel if I were you; to-morrow we can come back and see if there is any rescued property for you to claim. But don't blame yourself for forgetting anything. Why, I had an uncle who knew enough to be a Chief Justice and yet when his house burned all he carefully carried out was a pan of milk; and at the time of the Fryeburg fire a woman had cherished stereoscopic views in her parlor and a kettle of blueberries stewing in her kitchen, and she threw the pictures into the preserve to save them. Are you sure you are

warm enough?" she inquired anxiously, not realizing that her cordiality would drive away chills.

Jean did some hurried thinking: If a Kind Fate wished to play partners with her in the game of Life, why not let it? Had not people, ever since the war brought a realization that one stood perhaps on the brink of an awful chasm, felt that it was sensible to pick all one could of the flowers growing along its edge? To enjoy when you could have things and not to complain when you couldn't—yes, that was the idea. Thank heaven, she had not been burned; thanks not only for her own sake but because she had not been added, helpless and pathetic, to the sad and disabled already in the world. There was always need of and a demand for another joyous person.

These thoughts flew through Jean's mind not stopping to clothe themselves in words, but they decided her to follow Mrs. Vining to the launch. "I have rowed

about in the wake of the moon often, but to start out in the wake of flames is a new sensation," she said, trying to control the nervous chattering of her teeth and to produce a casual, conversational tone.

Mrs. Cabot Vining seemed to divine the effort the girl was making and, liking her for it, immediately made Jean's interests paramount. On the following morning, over in her well-appointed cottage, she would have planned the rest of Jean's earthly career and arranged for a transfer to heaven, had she found her guest wholly acquiescent. Miss Beverley was delightfully responsive, to be sure; she agreed beautifully about clothes and clubs and cookery and even children; but she would not say that she would occupy the guest chamber indefinitely, although her hostess frankly said that she expected no other company before her brother paid his annual visit, and that it seemed a god-send to have somebody right at hand there in the house to propound her views to.

"I think it is desirable, don't you, to provide for possible mishaps? Some might designate that as worry, but I call it precaution; and this very night I am managing a literary affair for the benefit of a New York Home for Disabled Aviatrixes. Cousin Tom Denning, although he is a minister, will persist in alluding to it as my Home for Fallen Women; but he is a great tease —"

"I met him at the Conference held on the Isles of Shoals, Mrs. Vining. He preached there finely on Sunday morning. He charged me to meet you if possible, but I little dreamed then that it would be. If you ever write him, I suppose you will be too modest to tell him—though I wish you would—what a blessing you have been to me, fitting me out ready for travelling again; for see, dear lady, how easily I am altering this cloth suit of yours so I can wear it."

She had changed the conversation purposely. She did not feel inclined to tell

about the events of the past few days; she fancied this was because Mrs. Vining was a person to listen to rather than to talk with. In reality, Jean Beverley had fine reserves in thought and speech to which occasionally there was added, as now, a shyness which gave her an elusive charm. Coupled with her mention of departure this caused her hostess to forget to follow up the subject of Star Island and to interject fervently, "Oh, don't talk of leaving me!" before she fell again upon the topic then uppermost in her busy brain.

"Now about to-night. It would be better, wouldn't it, to have two authoresses each read a little from her 'hitherto unpublished' works than to have one read a lot? I am having the affair at my house because I kept it partially cleared for Red Cross work two summers and people got used to coming here. I laid in, at that time, a supply of folding chairs, and they will be needed right away now for

my Civics afternoon. You see, with presidential elections confronting us and we women destined to vote frequently, I feel we ought to be taught to do it intelligently, and so I am arranging to have all those on the island,—the entire natural and acquired female population—assemble on Thursday to listen to our senior Senator. Next Friday morning it will be none too soon to go about engaging my berries; I am obliged to round up every available one on Bailey; but seeing that jam saved so many Belgian children during the war, I do not mean to be caught without plenty of preserves on my shelves.

“ Saturday I collect my washing and take it over to a steam laundry on Orr’s; it gives one a sense of having gained a day to get that seen to before Monday. Sunday my maids insist on having as their day off in Portland, and of course that is the very time people take to come sailing down to call on me. Which is your

forte—Welsh rarebit or creamed fish? Because if you will see to one end of the table it will help me so much. I always have to be prepared with a Sunday night lunch, and I like it best of any meal in the week; it comes nearer the plane of high thinking and plain living than any other, don't you think? It seems to me that clever men converse better over a cheese soufflé than they do over a course dinner. You see how I need a First Lieutenant here."

Miss Beverley's fast dizzying mind clutched for support at her original project: islands for rest. Yet how mistaken Marianna White had been about them; she must write and tell her so, but not until she herself had in all fairness investigated more than two.

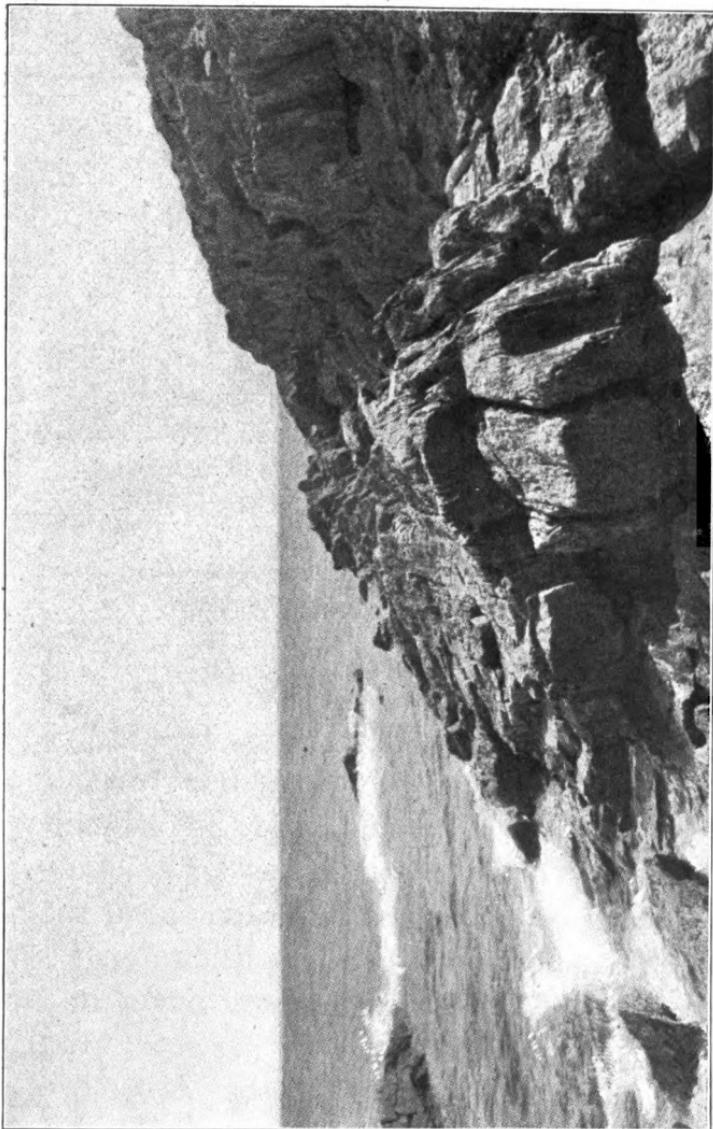
"Ay, ay, Captain!" she thereupon made answer blithely; "till Monday morning, if I may take you at your kind word thus lengthily; then I'll necessarily be going on, if I am to carry out the idea

with which I left home; and you are too good a planner yourself, dear Mrs. Vining, I feel sure, not to realize that one wants to complete one's scheme."

This was cannily said, obliging the business-like lady to see Jean's point. She nodded acquiescently, reaching for her sweater and telling her guest to pick up some wrap. "For while I go to Captain Eph's to find out whether the probabilities are that to-morrow will be one of his conscience days about lobsters, I want you to walk up to the ridge. You have not half seen the charm of Bailey yet."

It was revealed during the next hour, however; as Jean paced the high land and explored the rocks, she was to experience the usual Bailey temptation to buy a lot, build a bungalow and summer there forevermore. An atmosphere as clear as autumn's enabled her to see, eighty miles to the east, the outline of the White Mountains against a still glowing sky; at her right hand the moon rose out of the

BAILEY ISLAND IN CASCO BAY.



ocean, and in a sudden passion of love for the loveliness Jean quoted softly Hovey's:

I am fevered with the sunset,
I am fretted with the bay,
For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her topsails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow !
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the sea."

"It's—it's like a baptism," she thought; and the outdoor scene refreshed her for the ensuing active days within. Poise, Efficiency, Peace: those had been the three nouns featured in a little book, "Pep," which she recollects reading recently, and here she was trying to exemplify them.

That she succeeded admirably is to be inferred from the letter which Mrs. Vin-

ing, shortly after the steamer had taken her guest away, sat down and wrote. It ran:

"DEAR BROTHER CHAN:

"Our one-sided correspondence makes me cross. If you would only get your next week's work done the week before, as I do, you would have leisure to write me. I cannot tell from the papers what is the true inwardness of the strike at your mill. Oughtn't you to read 'Man to Man'? It is reviewed as wholesome for capitalists.

"I have been assisted in my little round of duties lately by a heaven-sent young lady—or rather, she was a brand plucked from the burning; you read perhaps of the hotel being destroyed over at Orr's? And I brought this Miss Jean Beverley home with me; my butting-in does sometimes do people good, Chandler. And she lost in the fire her tricotine suit and I had a blue serge one to give her. She had only to rip out the front panel and close up the front of the skirt with buttons and to take out the entire under-arm piece of the jacket—but there! you wouldn't understand. Anyway, I enjoyed her stay, while she was putting her clothes

to rights. She is Yankee smart and she is pretty, too. Perhaps you may recall her? For she spoke of making the acquaintance of Tom Denning at the Shoals and she thought your face, in the photograph of you here on my desk, looked familiar. Possibly you and she met. She likes islands, seeming to look upon them as places designed for rest, but I am sure I never found Bailey that. If she wanted to go on to a quieter one I told her to try Monhegan, provided she did not object to the seventeen miles of water between it and the mainland.

“When are you going to turn your own steps toward Maine and

“Your affectionate sister,
“MARCIA?”

And the immediate result of Webb's receipt of this letter was to cause him to examine it again and again, if peradventure he might find an overlooked item. None. “So she did not tell of seeing me. Now does that mean that she cared too much or too little?” Which proves that Chandler Webb had yet something to learn about women.

CHAPTER IV

"DON'T touch me, please. I am sure you are very kind but please go away—I could not lift my head."

And Jean Beverley, prostrate on one of the side seats of a worthy successor to the bobbing *May Archer*, turned her eyes, the blue in them paled with misery, away from the Captain who was solicitously hovering near her with a pillow. "I'll stay on the island the rest of my life rather than go through this again," she moaned.

Captain Page would have winked had there been anybody with whom to share his amusement; as he outranked the engineer and the nautical equivalent of a scullery maid, he was obliged in dignity to keep his opinions to himself; but chancing to see his face reflected in the shining captain, he saw it wore a grin.

"Shucks! Folks always said that of

Monhegan, and then they come back year after year. Take them artist fellows; I've seen 'em go all colors with seasickness till they looked like their own palettes, and yet they come regular as the mosquitoes. Well, here is Manana and your trouble is almost over, young lady"; and the Captain rang bells and stood at the wheel himself while the cork-like boat swung around the nose of the tiny outflanking peninsula and docked at Monhegan's wharf.

Jean Beverley had been given the address of only one boarding-place on the island; it turned out to be near by the pier and from the first moment it struck one's fancy favorably. Though it was high noon, no cooking odor mingled with that of climbing roses, and the parrot, which made a gorgeous bit of color at the front porch, was not rocking on his perch; if he had been swinging, Jean, still unsteady on her feet, would have turned her eyes away and gone on to where nothing swayed.

She did not at the moment realize that nobody who could remain at that little inn ever looked farther. She appreciated that her faint, "I will go in for tea and toast, please, but I probably shall not come for supper," was met by such understanding on the part of the young landlady that she found herself mustering an answering smile and hurriedly communicating her secret worry: "If I engage a room for a certain time and then it storms on the day set for my departure, can I stay on until the ocean quiets down?"

"Surely; boarders always do," came the quick and comforting answer. "I always manage to quarter my people some way till they feel it is safe for them to leave. Now if you want to rest ——"

"I came to the island on purpose ——"
Jean's ashy lips began as if of their own accord to murmur.

"Then you will prefer to have your room over at the cottage. We have supper at six."

And by that hour a revived Miss Beverley had no distaste for the snowy biscuit, the golden crispy fish and fritters, the snickerdoodles and sauce. From Monhegan's reputation, she knew that scattered through the dining-room must be notables from the world of art and literature, but no delicate appetites indicated that here and there were creative souls above earthly needs. Her own stabilization proceeded so well that she followed her use of knife and fork by taking up her pen, addressing to Miss Marianna White a card which bore the message:

“ My collection of islands grows interesting. This is one where I am likely to stay long enough to write letters.”

When she left her room to mail the postal she could not see beyond the steps. A heavy wetness like a blanket, like a double blanket, in fact, enveloped everything. In the poem, the fog comes on “ little gray feet ” but this one needed ga-

lashes, Jean thought, as she started to fumble her way toward the post-office.

Out of the mist a young voice hailed her. "Ahoy there! Can't I do your errand? If you have just arrived you have not learned the trick of waiting till the lighthouse beam revolves to the side where it shines down on this bumpy road. Now here comes the shaft of light. You hurry back in its path to the cottage and I will take your post-card."

The lad who spoke was to prove the factor which made life endurable during the next sixty hours when the fog-horn blew continuously. A handsome stripling of the age when a book of poetry in one of his pockets was balanced by a box of chocolates in another; a radiant youth when he was happy; a Byronic boy when he was not. To the fine possibilities in him Jean turned a sympathetic nature and as, seated before the open fire in the misnamed sun parlor they conversed of cabbages and kings, she found he led in

idealism and she felt almost relieved when at the sound of the dinner-bell he came back to being a glorious human boy again.

When a third successive day dawned exuding dampness, the boarders old and young, the self-centred, the social, those who liked Monhegan and those who still felt it must be an acquired taste, remembered Mark Twain's "There has been more said about the weather and less done about it than anything else," and proceeded to do something, if not to the weather at least to its depressing results. One boarder hoisted a placard, "Me for a 6-hour day of the blues!" and called for others to join in his strike against pessimism. "If not clearing, let us have something cheering!" was another sign displayed; and a prize was offered for the suggestion best calculated to make people generally acquainted.

This was won by the gentle landlady herself who spent the afternoon in her

kitchen and then piped all hands to the living-room when it came time for dessert at supper. She had made as many little cakes as there were persons present and on each had put the initials of some one in particular. The cakes were passed indiscriminately and the recipients ordered to seek out the individual whose name corresponded to the frosted letters, and to keep up the interchange till every man and woman had his or her own sponge-drop.

In a short time there was not a clique left, and not a cake.

Jean had drawn one which she could not rightfully assign until guided by the boy with whom, both being in gala mood, all the fun possible was being got out of the occasion.

“ No, Miss Beverley, the girl is a peach, and it is nice and thoughtful of you to try to get me introduced to her that way; but my cakie goes to the rheumaticky lady whom I already talk to half an hour daily.

Let's see yours—Ho! those are the initials of the churlish party over there—he's a famous painter, though; and you have got to go chat with him. Miss Letty expressly said we must not hand the cakes over and run."

But though Jean curtseyed her prettiest and though her offering was taken readily by a long-fingered artistic-looking hand, the man received it with what his admirers would have termed royal indifference; the boy called it rudeness.

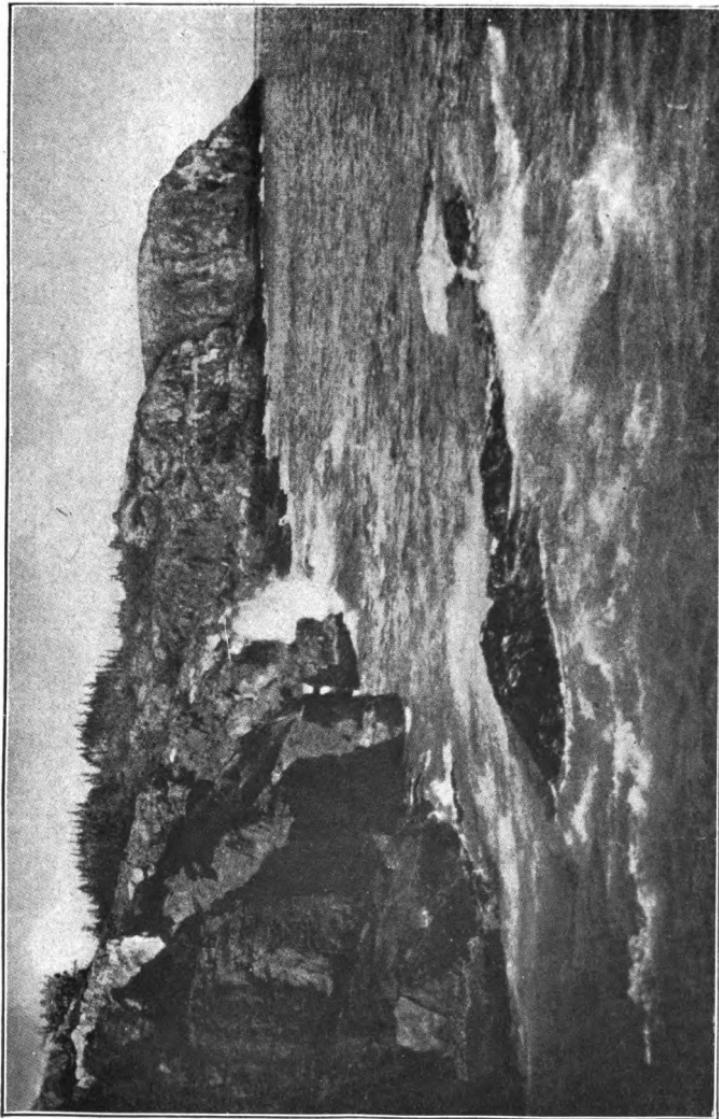
The advertisement had carried them through their last shut-in evening; even as the company nibbled and chatted, the tiresome fog-horn ceased to blow, and by morning there was visible a new heaven and a new earth. It was excitingly beautiful. Nobody spoke to any one at breakfast of plans for the day, each being desirous of going off alone to worship, uninterrupted, in the private chapel every rocky chasm could be imagined as transformed into; or of picking out of the scene

those charms he himself preferred, unaccompanied by a person of different and jarring taste.

Jean Beverley from having seen nothing of Monhegan and its views now found herself with an embarrassment of things to enjoy and uncertain which way to walk. Black Head? White Head? Cathedral Woods? What was the matter with Gull Rock where she now was? If the surf dashed higher elsewhere, it fell like diamond rain here, and in this special cleft she was sheltered from the increasing wind. No wonder the artists were daffy about the light and shade effects and that at dinner they could have been sawdust pudding instead of Indian, so eager were they to get out-of-doors to their work again.

"How happy this must make a marine painter!" she was musing rather enviously when crash came a clatter of falling articles, followed by a savage:

"Hellity devilty cussity damn!"



BLACK HEAD, ON MONHEGAN.

This was bad, but it might be worse; and in order to save the speaker additional regret when he spied her book and scarf and knew himself overheard, Jean raised her head above her rock and confronted the great artist whom she had encountered the previous evening.

“I beg your pardon for ripping that out—of course I did not know anybody was there. But it is enough to make a saint swear—not that I’m one——” and he shot her an impish look; “I ask you, what is a man to do when his easel has broken and when to go back to his studio for another will be to lose that transiently marvellous interplay of colors on the water? Been nothing like it all summer, hang it!”

Churl he was—and how the chivalrous boy would resent this bearishness in her presence—but it was genius, actual genius, which was raging, yearning to express itself.

“Can’t I hold the canvas for you? I’m

quite a steady person," and Miss Beverley smiled a little, encouragingly, into the perturbed face.

"No; your arms would twitch in five minutes. That was a kind thought on your part, though. If you really do want to help, I could fasten the picture on to your back, and you sit in front of me, a little lower down—not cross-legged—you would soon rue that. There's a rock where you can be easy. I say, this is awfully good of you. I am trying to paint the sea this summer and I can't do it to suit myself and it makes me irritable. Portraits are my specialty." He was, as he talked, lashing his canvas on to her shoulders, working in a deft, impersonal way.

"That's fine! If you can keep it up an hour or so, I'll have something done which I shall not be ashamed of even before Fred Waugh. Now that wave is cobalt outside, green inside; white for where it curls—the sand shows in a bit of umber

—the horizon needs just a suspicion of black.”

He paused and Miss Beverley remarked politely, for the sake of saying something:

“Does it?”

“By Jove! You’re right. Does it? Now who would have thought you would have known more than I do? It *doesn’t need black!*”

Jean’s shoulders almost shook upsettingly with the laughter she was stifling. The voice growled on behind her, still expressing amazement at her artistic acumen. Her hair ruffled ticklingly in an aureole around her and she was commencing to be aware of a backache when she heard a triumphant:

“Good stuff! Let me take off your harness. Want to see what you have helped to paint?”

He held his canvas for her inspection and while she was delightedly absorbed in that he took his first real look at her.

"Interesting type," he thought; and then he made the greatest reparation for his swearing that he could, for he announced grandly:

"I will do a sketch of you. You have got good points. Your beauty is of the evanescent changeable type, like a wave's. I suspect you have strong tides of the soul, mademoiselle." He squinted at her through his half-closed hand. "There's a demure touch—not the demureness of diablerie but of the Quakeress who is a potential flirt—you don't mind my analyzing, do you? It will help to make my study of you a success. Turn that way a bit, please—ho! that is toward Miss Letty's and that dancing light in your eyes is because you scent waffles and honey for supper. We must be starting. Would you be willing to go the longest way home? There is a particular shade I want to see again in a pool at low tide. If I said it was crimson I suppose you would say, 'Is it?'"

Still harping amusingly on her hypothetical art knowledge he plunged ahead, pack-laden, and she had the sense not to try to draw his attention to herself but to look at the broad expanse before them through his trained eyes. Ever after that walk she saw new tints and forms in old ocean, for, as he talked on, he seemed to drop the assumption that she knew much, and laid down the canons of art like the high priest of it which he was.

But that she had found favor in his estimation was apparent when they struck into the narrow path from the cliff to the inimitable street (?) and he remarked, oblivious of her really tired and untidy appearance:

“ You look fine as a fiddle, and I suppose you will be going right in to supper. I must go and get off these painting togs. Now, Miss—Miss Christophera (that ought to be the feminine for burden-bearer), you come to my studio at ten tomorrow morning; it will be an indoor

job. You are not gypsy enough to be painted against a background of all outdoors."

Posing for the picture did not prove arduous, though the idea of a mere sketch was early abandoned and a portrait carefully worked out which was called one of the artist's notable achievements; certain it is that when it was exhibited with the season's output of the Monhegan art colony, every man who studied it saw in it something of the lady of his dreams.

At some of the concluding sittings an uplifted brush had playfully threatened and there had been a mock scolding: "Stop looking like that! I did not see that yearning when I began to paint you. There are two kinds of wistfulness, young lady—one the worth-while kind which leads you to see visions, and the other that ends by making you mopey. Anyway, nip yours in the bud, for I do not want to do your face over again. Aren't Monhe-

gan and I good enough for you? You don't appear as serene as you did a week ago."

Jean's expression became panicky. "Don't I? But I am taking islands in order to become so. Perhaps I ought to try one in a different latitude and longitude. At least," she added rather roguishly, "I will consider your feelings and go away from here so that people cannot compare your work with the original. I will go—tell me where to go, Master? You have taught me so that I expect a great deal from Nature now; if you say some place is worth seeing, I know it will be."

"Little Cranberry, then," came the instant answer; "you will find it called Islesford on the map now, but the old name has more individuality and so I continue to use it. The place cannot hold a candle to Monhegan as an island, but it's got a view that beats anything on the coast. 'Ye Gods!' as Willie Baxter says,

I would like to be twenty-five again and once more conceited enough to think I could put that panorama on canvas. Here I am, come down to trying to paint a rod of surf! Go on to your next islet—leave me to put the last touches on the portrait. With your permission I will show it in New York this fall; then I will give it to you—perhaps as a wedding present, Mademoiselle Jean—yes, doubtless soon."

And with this gallantry, surprising her in one whom she had nicknamed *Mr. Ursa Major*, she felt herself finally dismissed from the studio.

It was the Nicest Boy who at the last was the one to really see her off, getting to the wharf just in time to hold out both his hands; they were not empty. "Sugar plums," and he passed over a box. "I don't know that you will like the kind; I asked for the candy which had been in the store the least long time. And this —" with the good-bye clasp he gave her a

folded paper. "There are fourteen lines, so I presume it is a sonnet; anyway, it is a tribute."

"I will treasure it now, and when you have grown to be a well-known author I shall have it framed," Jean said merrily, to lighten his dark young gloom. "Remember, when you get the scholarship at Oxford, I shall look you up, if I can finance a summer in England."

Certainly she had had a royal time on Monhegan, quite as if it had been her tiny principality. At the baseball games up by the lighthouse there was always a group of non-participants at her feet; on rainy days the maker of arts and crafts jewelry tried effects in stones and metals against the good lines and clear tints of Jean's throat and ears. The great lady of the House Beautiful had made her feel at home there; she was welcomed to the literary fireplace at which clever talk was heard; the painters gave her private views of what they later would hang in city gal-

leries. And there had been priceless hours of doing nothing.

What was the matter then? Why, instead of feeling rested, had she become restless? Had she begun to experience this when the Gothic arches of the cathedral woods brought to her mind, by force of contrast, the severely simple Gosport church and the candlelight service there? Or had she been uneasy from that hour when there had come a note from Mrs. Vining which had mentioned expecting a visit from her brother Chandler if he did not get shot during some of the strikes?

There had been one night of exceeding beauty when she had sailed, and not alone, around Monhegan; was it possible that she missed something—the danger of a squall or a stampede—say?

Just when came the realization of what every woman knows sooner or later, that the lovelier the scene the more it needs one special person in it?

Without question, if she were to de-

scribe her stay on Monhegan to Marianna White, the recital would be entirely satisfactory as a tale. Why not write the promised letter then? It could begin:

“ This place is worth coming to just for its own natural charms; and there’s the nicest boy who looks up to me and a famous artist who looks down on me,—”

But what if her pen, having gone thus far, should uncontrollably proceed with Ouija-like perspicacity, “ but I want a *mate!* ”

CHAPTER V

IF Miss Beverley had been asked why she was leaving a known good for the unknown attractions of Islesford she would probably have given an evasive answer; with the alluring suspicion of hesitation in her speech which made her seem twice as innocent as she was, she might have said to the Monhegan acquaintances who regretted her departure:

“As the seventeen miles between here and the mainland are to-day as still as the traditional millpond, and as they are usually an example of what cross currents can do toward stirring up the ocean, am I not wise to go while the going is good?”

At the present moment, however, her memories and hopes were merged in the pleasurable sensation of watching the Maine coast’s splendor unfold and in-

crease as the boat steamed quietly ahead. She was on the upper deck of the *J. T. Morse*, which passengers spoke of with affection as of an old family friend, even though they had had to seek it at an exasperatingly early hour on the Rockland wharf.

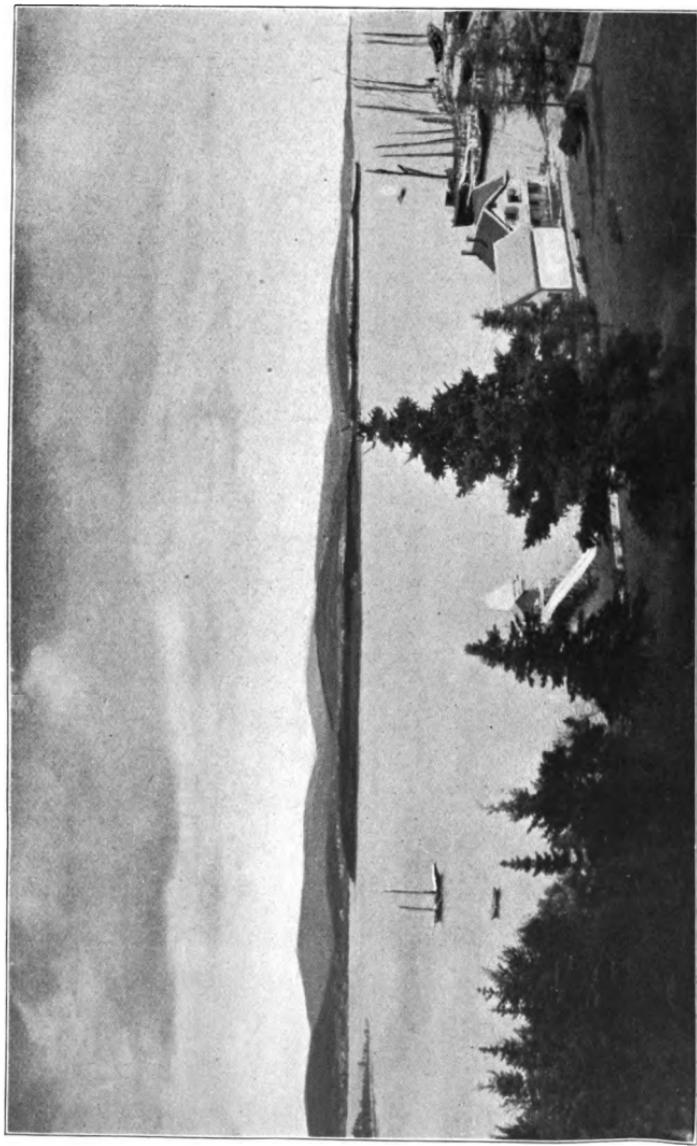
The Camden hills rose on the left—one hated to leave them behind; but there was dome-like Blue Hill coming into sight; and reaches and havens opened in fair vistas; and stops at intermediate places both gave local color as such landings always do, and postponed the sorry hour when the trip would be over. The prow of the boat might reveal coming glories in scenery, but the warmer lee side of the steamer commanded enough variety and Jean kept her chair where one of the boat's officers had placed it for her with a facetious:

“ If you sit here, ma'am, you'll beat the Kaiser, for you will have a place in the sun.”

As she noted in sky and sea every possible shade of cerulean color, she thought, "Nature is so adorable when she has the blues, how did it come to be a term of disparagement to say of a person that she has them? It is a day for Old Prob to take as a model. The Clerk of the Weather deserves a good fat tip."

If these were her feelings during the early morning hours, what were they later in the forenoon after Mt. Desert itself came in sight? Jean remembered the admonition of her father when training her in English: "Save your superlatives, daughter." Certainly she needed her biggest adjectives now.

So this was South West Harbor. "Well, I could be satisfied here. Why was I told to go farther?" she cried to nobody in particular. At North East she would willingly have cast in her lot with the people leaving the *Morse*. At Seal Harbor she looked longingly up the road to where she saw boarding-houses which



LOOKING FROM SOUTH WEST HARBOR.

appeared homelike, some stores, a tea room, a library, and the other necessities of life. She almost turned up this little street in preference to going toward the other wharf to find, as she had been directed to do, the mail-boat which would take her the last lap of her voyage, namely, the two and a half miles to Little Cranberry.

"Mt. Desert itself being 'a body of land entirely surrounded by water,' why, if I tarried upon it, would it be breaking any contract tacitly made with Marie? All I agreed to do was to take a vacation on islands and describe them to her."

But at that moment a huge truck and a rattling automobile buzzed along the highway above the steps where Miss Beverley stood waiting while the newspapers and letters were being sorted. A strong odor blew down to her.

"Whew! that settles it! If I am to smell gasoline, it would be more novel to

smell it in the launch out on the water rather than on this highly sophisticated road."

And more willingly she edged nearer the precipitous cleated plank leading down to the lower float from which, as it was the hour of low tide, the mail-boat would leave.

"What a nice rural free delivery!" she said pleasantly, after she had settled her box, her bag, and herself; but her words woke no response in the skipper-postman who overlooked her and kept his stolid gaze fixed on buoys and landmarks as he started his balky engine, threw a cover over Uncle Sam's canvas bags to keep the dashing spray from wetting them and headed for Little Cranberry. But the sole other passenger smiled assentingly.

"Yes, isn't it? It seems to make every postal I get have the importance of coming by special messenger. I often spend the summer hereabouts, but for real rest give me Little—Islesford. (I don't take

kindly to its new name.) It is not recreation that is getting me there this year, though; and yet it can scarcely be called work."

This enigmatic remark was to receive explanation later. Following upon their landing, they had come up together from the wharf through the village, the younger woman bowing to the native residents she had known previously and getting in return nods of a friendliness which appeared to include newcomer Jean. "Isn't it dear? Don't you love it? Aren't you crazy over it?" asked Miss Sweet-and-Twenty, with a comprehensive gesture of her hand toward the people, the place and the view.

Miss Beverley laughed light-heartedly. Dismissed for a time was the past; if islands separated you from some old delights, they likewise put afar off the little cares of yesterday.

"Every isle is a fresh beginning;
Every isle is the world made new,"

she paraphrased. " If it were not that I am hungry and dinner perhaps waiting for us, I should want to go up that lane and down that road and into that store."

" And once inside, you would linger till supper-time, for the storekeeper is the best thing that hasn't yet been put into print. He is like nothing so much as those hard, spicy checkerberry lozenges you buy on the trains up country. There is a tradition that after we got into the war, a Cranberrian approached the counter and asked if he had any khaki, and he said, ' I dunno! You look in the refrigerator yourself, Ike.' And there's a funny story about how he showed himself a true optimist: You know horses are almost unknown on Islesford—there's only one now and then for draft work—and when he was driving behind a fiery steed in Bangor it got scared and stood up in the air, and Bion (that's our storekeeper) far from being frightened, glanced up the perpendicular back of the beast and said

cheerfully, ‘Wal, if he’s rarin’ he can’t be kickin’. He says his name’s homely but perhaps it makes people think of buyin’.

“Now there’s our boarding-house and there’s our cow; and at this early stage of the season there will be very few of us to divide her products among; consequently you will gain—how you will gain flesh! I declare, even if it does give us a tardy mark, I am going to make you go in and get weighed so that you can tell how many pounds you will owe to your stay here.”

With youthful impetuosity she fairly dragged Jean back a rod to the store, out to where the scales stood in the rear room, and while Bion, kindness itself, was moving off meal bags and adjusting his spectacles, she buzzed in and about the counters, trying to see if he had any crewels. “They are just right for the children to use in their perforated card work; stronger than the modern worsted. I couldn’t get any in Boston. Are you sure

you haven't any left over from befo' the war, Mr. Bion? That end label looks as if it might — What *is* in that box 'way up there?"

"I dunno. I've often wondered myself."

At this reply the girl gave Miss Beverley a triumphant glance as if a pet child had shown off well, and then with sincere thanks for his weighing of them and with pretty adieus the two hurried on to their delayed dinner. They were late; and though the dessert was piled temptingly high with whipped cream, the girl had to leave it untasted, push back her chair and rise.

"I have a two o'clock appointment with the lady who engaged me to come teach the island children this July and August. It will be my first Kindergarten to manage all by myself. Of course I have been in training for it, but these two months I can try out all my theories on the poor little kiddies. Oh, by the way,

would you like to be an expense reducer?" The listener's face becoming blank at the question the speaker with a laugh continued, "That's what we call boarders who don't know one another but who want to sail or row or go over to Bar and are ready to club together to hire a boat—makes it so much cheaper. You look as if you would be nice about joining in. It's a good idea, isn't it?"

"Let me know when you need me," Miss Beverley said, as there came a pause in the other's enthusiasm.

"Perhaps to-morrow when I have to carry all my books and blocks to the Community House, I should like your assistance. And as my watch had to be left at Stowell's for repairs could you loan me yours for a day or two? Thank you so much!"

Soon, though without any set intention on her part, it came to be Jean's frequent habit, as she started out on her morning walk, to fall in with the children

trooping to their schoolroom and to enter and listen while they learned the few lines of an opening prayer and the songs which every well-regulated kindergartener drills into her pupils. The tots responded by clinging to Jean's hands and to going along the road with her in a happy little bunch, just as they did with "teacher."

Thus when it came to pass that the latter sprained her ankle slightly in tramping to Marsh Head and became temporarily a shut-in, Miss Beverley suggested that she substitute in the school, and her offer was gratefully accepted.

She realized then that the island cure had been operative to a large degree. Although separately she had sometimes found them ludicrously the opposite of restful, the cumulative effect of Star, Bailey and Monhegan had been magical. She was actually glad now to wake up to a daily duty. Her step was light again; at least, her body had resiliency. And her spirit—well, doubtless that would be

toned up by children, scenery, interesting fellow tourists arriving, and air which, if it could have been bottled and sold, would have driven drugs out of the market.

And there was promise of more diversions to come shortly. Both orally and by means of his bulletin-board, the landlord gave notice that the church would open on Sunday. He enlarged on the subject as his boarders came and went at breakfast time, explaining that it was the Coast Island parson who was coming, and explaining somewhat the duties of this missionary. His words did not sink deeply into Miss Beverley's mind, which was busily planning how she could make this an especially full and happy day at the Kindergarten; it was to be her last one in charge there, for the regular teacher would be out and about the following week.

Hurrying to the Community House, Jean arranged a large circle of little chairs, hoping that every one would be

filled, beamed upon those who dropped into their seats promptly, and with special gusto led off in the singing of:

“Good morning, good morning,
Good morning to all;
The clock points the hour,
And we come at its call.”

Not every child had thus arrived, however. One small girl had idled along, intending to miss no sights on the way from home to school, and at this juncture she sidled in and piped shrilly:

“I guess they’ve come, Miss Beverley —the preacher and the dentist. I see two men coming up by the big lilac bush. Yes’m, there’s a dentist comes, too, if he can get eight of us to have him. It hurts, but it’s the right thing,” she added virtuously, having received the enlightenment of the modern curriculum. “I see ‘em when they was leaving the wharf.”

“*Were* leaving, dear, and *saw*, not see, remember;” and then Jean Beverley could not have been sure for an electrify-

ing instant whether she saw or dreamed that, passing by in full sight from the windows, were Chandler Webb and Rev. Thomas Denning.

An invisible leash slipped; her heart ran riot. And also, in the tangible school world before her, emotions seemed suddenly unchecked; for the smallest pupil, recollecting the pain of forceps and file, dug her knuckles into tearful eyes and screamed, "I'm going to hide. I won't let him find me!" A boy's hand waved frantically and sawed the air several minutes before Miss Beverley collected herself enough to say:

"Please don't do that, Samuel. This is not a day school where you have to get leave for everything. You can speak out what you wish to say, if you do it politely."

"Yes'm. Well, my mother pulled my tooth last week, so I won't have to —"

"Sh-h-h! Children! That is not the dentist—and I am the only one who needs

to run away," she added whimsically to herself. "However, I am not in evidence if I stay right here on my job. Now, Bessie, do you want to be a little bird and hop?"

But the game was interrupted, for within ten minutes Miss Beverley was traced to the Community House, Mr. Chandler Webb being in the habit of finding what he was after. Very debonair he seemed as he appeared in the wide doorway, hat in hand, and although his look at Jean was pretty direct and the clasp of his hand a close one, his tone was reassuringly light and his manner that of a casual stranger as he acceded to her suggestion that he address the school.

If she had thought to put her business before his pleasure by this ruse, she was disappointed, for he now admonished gently:

"I hope you enjoy your privilege, children. You love your teacher? That's right; we all do. Perhaps she will be

willing to give you a recess while you all go get some ice-cream."

Jean Beverley's color was deeper than could be accounted for by the reddening effect of sea air; obviously she could not deprive her little flock of the coveted cones, but she reached for her shade hat and started to go with them from the building.

Webb put out a detaining hand. "Please," he begged; "I do not want you chilled any more, by frozen things," he said mischievously; then in earnest vein, "If this is the Fortunate Isle and you the princess on it, believe me, I am, in my turn, no monster—no Caliban, to be avoided even by your eyes. I think that if I could see them, they must be expressing surprise at our heaving in sight here. Perfectly simple. I ran up to sister Marlie's at Bailey, and she showed me a note from you in which you spoke of the charm of this place ——"

"What, oh what else did I write?"

Jean's memory groped wildly backward, as one's does under such circumstances.

"And so I decided to come along and visit Mrs. Cousin Tom at Seal Harbor. Don't look so shocked, Miss Beverley, like a careful Martha of a housekeeper; that was not so thoughtless in me as it sounds, for Emily annually gives me a string of invitations, and to accept one and drop in on her is only like cutting off a coupon. Directly I got to the Dennings', I convinced Tom that it was his duty to come over here and see about the Sunday service he is to conduct later in the season; he has gone now to look into the church. I had an impulse to stop off at Monhegan to see your portrait, but this is better," and he glanced under her broad hat.

"You left Mrs. Vining well, I hope—and—and the strikers?" Jean inquired, feeling that she must attempt some conversation.

He smiled rather grimly. "Marcia is all right; but my men—well, with careful

nursing I guess they will pull through, though they are having rather a bad epidemic of cussedness. I left them in the hands of a Board of Inquiry. I felt I had to get out or get mad. Now, Miss Beverley, can your landlord give us two men dinner? And Miss Jean, if I can hire a boat would you like to row over to Big Cranberry and see the surf? Is it true that there is none on Islesford?"

"They can answer all your questions at the post-office," she replied demurely.

"No, they can't; not the one as to whether you will go with me?"

"If you can row as well as you can drive a car——" she then had to laugh consentingly.

The Rev. Dr. Denning was eminent because of spiritual and intellectual qualities, but he was popular because he knew the hearts of men and women. He took pains to dispatch his dinner so as to be the first to leave the table, explaining to his

Cousin Chandler that he would join him for the return to Seal Harbor at half-past five o'clock, but that he had fallen in with a brother clergyman with whom it would be most unfraternal not to spend the intervening hours; and the only jocosity he allowed himself was an aside to Webb:

“Now, go ahead, and if you can't hire a boat, buy one.”

This extreme measure was not necessary. Even on that island where private ownership prevailed, by the hocus-pocus of the transfer of a bill, a rowboat was found to hire, and flecked first by sunshine and then by a shower, Chandler and Jean made the short distance across. Back and forth along by Big Cranberry they paddled, baffled in their desire to go ashore because it was so early in the season that floats had not generally been let down. If they had known, there was a landing place around by the Spindle, but by the time they noticed this, the water

had roughened enough to make rowing work instead of play, and they were content to seek no farther but to keep, while Webb shipped his oars, near to that spot between Big and Little Cranberry which is the vantage point for feasting on the scene.

“ Yet—see! ” cried Jean, pointing back to where one end of a rainbow rested, “ if we only could have investigated that island! I never came so near the pot of gold. I shall always know that if we had landed there, we should have found it—there where the arch is resting on those pointed firs.”

“ It is only an emblem,” Webb responded following her gaze; “ and if we but get our heart’s desire —” he paused musingly, or was it meaningly? and Jean hastily broke the silence, carrying on, however, the fiction that they were in a fairyland where dreams come true.

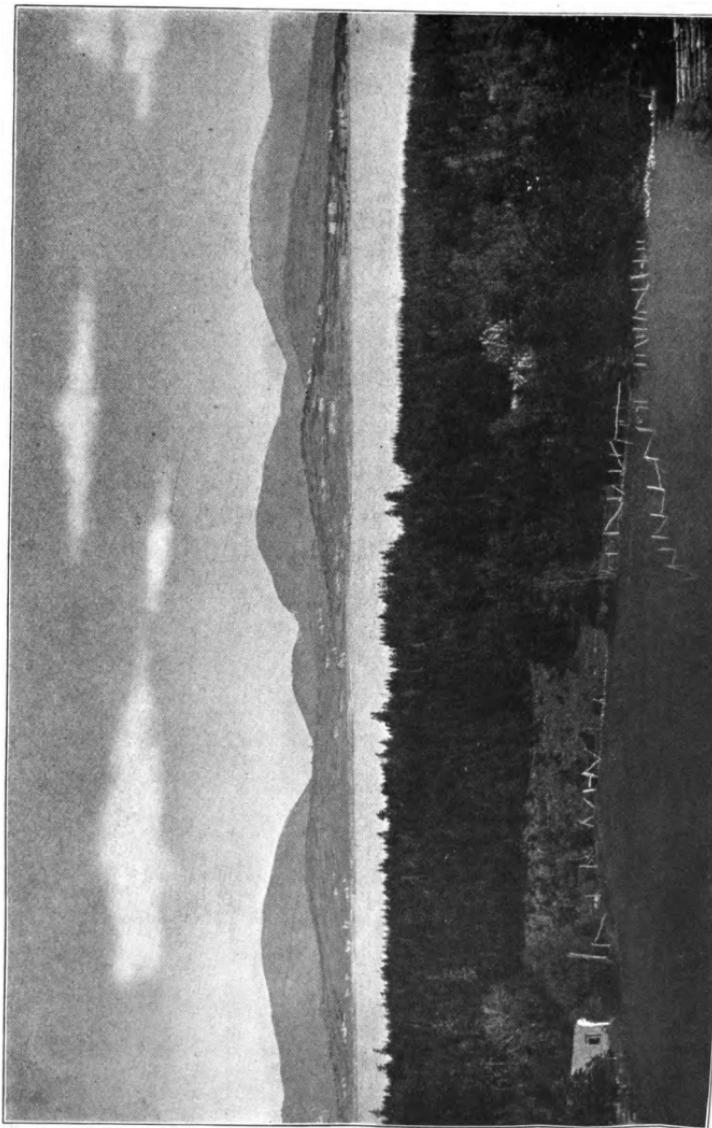
“ I have a Pretend House on Islesford; would you like to see it? ”

"If you will be so kind as to show it to me. Suppose we throw our watches overboard."

"Oh, there will be time. It is just over there."

That was an unreally vague direction, but as soon as Webb had tied the boat and settled for it, Jean led him unhesitatingly past a few dwellings and through some woods to a broad, gray enchanting home, partially opened but not yet occupied by its owner. As one sure of her way, she sped through a pergola around to a great circular sweep of piazza, and flitting up its steps she stood by the rose-covered balustrade, extending her hand in the manner of a hostess to a favored guest. Then tiptoeing as if a noise might rouse other claimants to the fair domain, she led Chandler Webb to peer in at the long French windows.

"Good! It's fine! I admire your taste!" he exclaimed heartily; "but as we cannot get in to that luxurious davenport,



MR. DESERT FROM LITTLE CRANBERRY.

suppose we try that rustic settee down at the ocean's edge. Ah ha! there's a private pier to stroll out upon and—yes, a boat bringing supplies," he chuckled, chiming in with her proprietary feeling about the place. "But there is no ladder down to the water yet; how will the delivery man manage?"

Idly they watched a launch make for the rocks below, and to their amusement they saw one of the two figures in it leap out, arms filled with parcels of a size and shape which bespoke their origin in a corner grocery. These being tucked away in the crannies safely above high-water line, the man jumped back into the motor-boat and departed.

"Supper, by all that's lucky!" Webb cried gleefully. "Of course they really are eatables for that next cottage where smoke is coming out of the kitchen chimney. But suppose it was our cache; let's see—what did we order?"

"A bottle of salad dressing," Jean re-

plied promptly; "and some canned soups, half a dozen lemons —"

"Coffee; you didn't forget the coffee?" he entreated.

"That bag of—of Saratoga chips will get dreadfully slack," she continued. "Oh, I hope you do not mind Maine sardines with a French label?"

"I don't mind anything," he almost groaned, "except that although we turned our faces away from the sun-dial as we passed it, there is a telltale shadow lengthening over Cadillac and the song sparrows which were singing on the tips of the trees have quieted down to give the whip-poorwills a chance. It's over, sure enough."

He did not say what was over, but Jean knew. It had been delicious make-believe. How pleasant it would be to come back to the House with this new association enhancing its charms—but *would* it be pleasant? She suspected she would walk in a different direction on the mor-

row; she little knew how tempted the man was to try to turn the pretense into reality; to talk about "our house"; yes, even—dear heaven! "our breakfast." But not yet—not yet. There must be no hint of play, no too-quick transition from jest to earnest, when he really opened his heart to her.

They found Mr. Denning waiting on the wharf amid a group of fishermen, apparently getting and giving valuable information. "Did you know, my dear young lady, that this is a toggle?" and he pulled a wooden pin out of a lobster pot; "and that it is the mountain cranberry such as one finds on the summit of Moosilauke which grows here at sea-level too? Now where is that *Weasel* we engaged to take us back, Chan? This being in a locality where nothing leaves on schedule reminds one of the hit-or-miss existence of those days during the railroad strike, doesn't it?

"Awfully glad to have run across you

again, Miss Beverley. I want my wife to meet you. I would suggest getting up a yachting party—we have a kind of marine flivver of our own; but Mrs. Denning declares we are to go to New York in it, and I tell her that although John D. Rockefeller's estate dominates Seal Harbor, the land does not flow with Standard Oil, and that if we want gasoline enough to get us home we can't use it in tripping round in these waters. You see, our motive power is divided into three parts—a little sail, a little stream, a little Socony.

"I presume you have been to Bar Harbor? Not so? Well, get that done. It is queer how, before people come here, they think Bar Harbor *is* Mt. Desert. You will find it up round the corner over there," and he pointed away to the right where gleamed Frenchman's Bay. "Then come over and let us show you *the* Harbor. There is a telephone on Islesford, I understand? Then you will get a message from

Mrs. Denning setting an afternoon for you to go up to Jordan Pond tea-house with us."

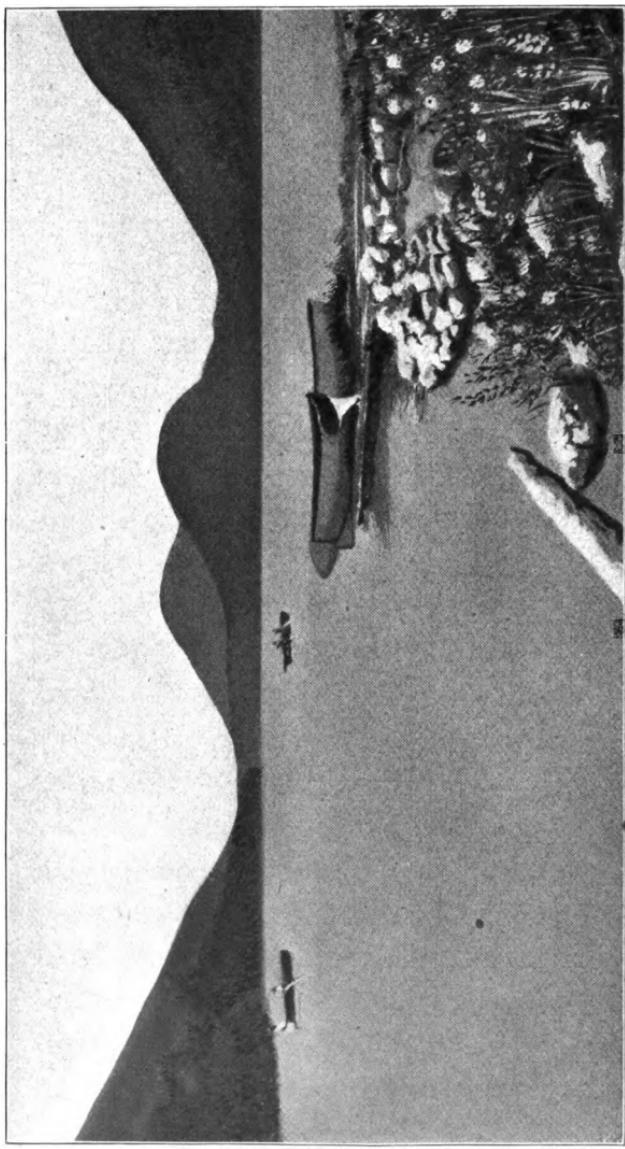
"Thank you, oh, much!" Jean replied, with the smile of a happy child, frankly grateful for the friendliness. "But it will have to be soon. I must be leaving —"

"Are you rested?" the parson asked with a sudden recollection of her feelings when at the Shoals.

Jean was caught rather off her guard. At that moment she was not conscious of having any body at all; but she had never forgotten reading once, "Excitement is not health, though it may pass for it until the break comes." Was she keyed up or truly recreated? Disconcerted, she gave a hesitating, "Yes—no!" and I think we shall have to excuse it that the two men laughed.

Not once since she had been on Little Cranberry had Jean Beverley missed going at close of day to watch these

beautiful high hills with their feet in the waves and their heads in the rosy clouds. "The only place," she meant to write Marianna, "where one does not have to choose between ocean and mountains for a vacation;" but this night, as she looked toward the sunset, she realized chiefly that she looked toward Seal Harbor.



JORDAN POND AND THE BUBBLES.

CHAPTER VI

I AM mortified to be enjoying this chicken so much in such a heavenly spot; it seems grossly materialistic."

Jean Beverley said this seated at one of the little square tables near the rustic railing of the Tea House looking down upon Jordan Pond. The Rev. Thomas Denning heaped her plate again as he replied:

"No less a personage than Charles Dudley Warner wrote that a landscape looks better against a background of good beefsteak. Have more of the broiler."

"Oh, save some for your wife and Mr. Webb," protested Jean; "I am willing to exchange either light or dark meat from our platter for the marmalade and muffins which seem to have gravitated to their side of the table."

The four had arrived at the piazza by

way of the woodsy footpath, enjoying that two-mile stroll for itself and not regarding it merely as a means to an end. Slight and gentle Emily Denning was the wielder of an exceptionally cordial and charming pen, as is frequently the case with one who is somewhat reserved in speech, and her prompt note to Miss Beverley inviting her to this luncheon had been irresistible.

She had appraised Jean even as she greeted her—how do women do it?—and had instantly dismissed any misgiving she may have had, smiling quietly back at her husband when his look caught hers and seemed to ask, “Now isn’t this a nice girl I have found?” In their turn the married pair were the object of estimating glances, for after great-hearted Tom had lifted his sweet lady over a bit of bog, Webb had nodded toward them affectionately and whispered to Jean:

“Rooseveltian, aren’t they?”

It was largely because of Mrs. Den-

ning's appreciation of their badinage that the others kept up its interchange; and it was her guiding spirit which now directed, for after a glance at her watch, she said with mild firmness:

" Anybody who is going to climb a Bubble ought to be about it. Tom and I have done it so often do you mind if we beg off this time? You will find the view worth the climb, Chandler; and you and Miss Beverley cannot get lost. The way to do it is to hire a canoe at the foot of this bluff, paddle across, fasten it to the nearest bush and strike up into the well-marked path. It isn't a 'long, long trail.' I am not going to let you tarry for dessert now but you shall have it to cool you off after you return, and I assure you the ice-cream here is worth looking forward to. Yes, that is the direction, right across the lawn. Tom dear, will you"—for he had made an irresolute move as if undecided whether to accompany the climbers,—"will you please step into the gift shop

and see if I left my *Harper's* on the post-card counter?"

Webb and Jean ceased making talk as soon as they found themselves alone; that in itself was significant. But that he was in her thoughts might have been gathered from her first remark, spoken softly after their red canoe had shot out upon the sheet of water small and still as a hand-mirror.

"It seems so queer to link you with Bubbles and rainbows when my first knowledge of you was associated with strikes and pistols."

"And you are wondering which is the real Chandler Webb?" he asked.

"A diamond has many sides," came the slow, clear answer. Spoken as if giving some one his due, and without a trace of coquetry, Jean would have called it she was only being agreeable and honest; but her words together with the prettiness of her sitting there, trimly dressed for the tramp, flushed with expectancy, leaning toward him as she scanned the approach-

ing shore, caused Webb to exclaim involuntarily, "Jean!" an outburst which he sought to cover up by strict attention to beaching the boat.

As soon as they entered upon the upward trail they passed into the atmosphere of a world whose calm was contagious. A region of great and little growths, of old favorites to pick or new specimens to secure, of sudden glimpses of tarns and gorges and wooded flanks. In places the ascent was steep and to master it engrossed them. Once upon the summit, the view satisfied entirely in extent and beauty and what they could not rightly name in mountains and bays they were content to admire. True to type of happy couples, Jean sat down on a low rock and Chandler threw himself at her feet; they did not slip into personalities, however; for the time being, nature was enough, and they commiserated "Poor old Champlain, who called this paradise 'desert mountains.' "

It was after the descent had begun that slipping of an actual kind became possible; to Jean it rapidly grew probable; and when they came to the most precipitous place and she looked dizzily down, she was seized with a feeling that she could not set foot upon the narrow shelf of rock which at that point became the sole pathway. Out of practice in mountaineering as she was, and remembering vividly the sound and sight when a Cape Ann ledge had crumbled and she had seen a fellow-tourist dashed into a chasm, she now averred she could not go farther; there was no longer any thought in her mind of a brink other than the real one before her.

At first Chandler Webb took her attitude as a regular part of the outing of a man and a maid: she frightened; he reassuring. He laughingly inquired if she were going to let him find his way down alone; but she lifted a piteously white face and he saw she was genuinely afraid.

“ That’s cruel and masculine,—to suggest leaving me.”

Good Lord! she *must* be unstrung if she could imagine he would do that. If he could only carry her, or if there were space to draw her down beside him and persuade her into reasonableness; but the plain truth of the matter was that she had got to follow him, Indian file, for the next rod or two. He must get her out of her despairing mood. “ Don’t be—silly, Miss Beverley. Surely you aren’t getting nerves, girl!”

She stood rigid a second and then her face flamed indignantly. After which she said coldly, “ Of course not. Lead on, Mr. Webb;” and with head haughtily erect, scorning to watch her step, she passed over the perilous place, and in silence they returned to the shore.

As he assisted her into the canoe he did not release her hand but detained her until she had smiled at him shamefacedly and adorably and he had said entreatingly:

"Jean, honey, I *am* masculine, but I'm *not* cruel!"

It is not to be supposed that it was with a weary air they reappeared on the lawn; though just before they came to the brow of the bluff Webb had asked solicitously, "Feel tired?" and Jean had answered, "Oh no! I feel—like Elijah, except that he got there without climbing;" and only a more marked hesitation in her speech told that she really was a bit fatigued and much moved.

"Hurry, children, please," Mrs. Denning was calling from the veranda. "I am ever so sorry, but you cannot have your ice-cream. We are obliged to leave at once."

"The fact is," the Reverend Thomas interrupted, "I have had a telephone call from the manager of the Chautauqua running, this week, over at Bar Harbor. He says their four-minute man has failed to put in an appearance—did not get up in time to catch the *Morse* probably—and

they must have his place taken on their program.

"From the manager's urging, one would infer a show was not legal nowadays without somebody's saying something about Government. I told him to get one of the notables staying at Bar Harbor; reminded him that would be cheaper than paying for our transportation over; but he said they were all off playing golf, and anyway, the ticket-holders wouldn't want to listen to a super-magnate; and he got peevish and kept on telephoning till I thought he would use the Chautauqua's profits all up, and I weakly said I would come. But look here, Chan, you have got to do it instead of me. I should preach to them, it being a habit I have dropped into, you know, and what they are after is facts not the beatitudes; they want a level-headed business man who is acquainted with the ins and outs of the dealings of Uncle Sam and yet can lay it down to them that with all his faults we love him

still—so that the audience will rise and sing ‘O say!’ with gusto. Not a word, my boy. You did this sort of thing to crowds, day after day, when we were rousing for war. I’m right. I know I’m right;” but he turned for confirmation to the two women who were listening with interest.

“ Strange but true, he *is* right, Cousin Chandler. It *is* up to you,” Mrs. Denning smiled. And Jean’s eyes shone; “ I think it is his patriotic duty—and can we really go over and hear him?”

Webb’s expression had been worthy of film reproduction; he had glowered at Parson Tom, sulked at Mrs. Emily’s verdict, and stared abjectly at Miss Beverley. After which, with a submissive, “ Jes’ you say, ladies,” and a combative, “ Thomas, I’m not sure I am their man if they want one who says, ‘ My country, right or wrong,’ ” he requested:

“ Give me a minute in which to brush up. I am not looking like a platform ora-

tor"; to which the minister returned a comforting, "Then what you say will go down with the crowd a good deal better."

They started rather silently on the spin over to Bar Harbor. Make as good time as they might in reaching the tent, Webb's speech would have to be the climax to the program, not its introduction. He realized this exacting condition which he would be expected to meet, and when their party of four went out to the automobile hired at the Jordan Pond garage, he slipped into the left-hand seat saying to Mr. Denning, "Let me drive. It will give me something to think about besides the fifty-seven varieties of fool I am going to make of myself."

From the tonneau Mrs. Denning heard his unhappy mutterings and cast about in her mind for a way to mitigate them. Her project once evolved, she said to her husband, pitching her voice so that Chandler also should hear:

"Tom, Miss Beverley has been saying

she was almost through with her stay at Islesford. We must coax her to go off with us three to-morrow."

"Good enough!" and the Rev. Mr. Denning turned a beaming face. "Of course. We always have the same ideas, Millie, only you get them first. There is plenty of room on the yacht. There isn't a single luxury, though, except a first-class pilot,—one of the natives who signs for service with me every summer."

Jean's face had grown radiant, but at recollection of a certain or rather an uncertain boat earlier in her travels, her looks fell; "I am not a good sailor," she confessed.

"But the *Sea Gull* is, my dear young lady; and, anyway, if the water becomes really rough we will put in somewhere. Do please come. Emily here would have a dull time with only Chan and me. Besides, in your study of islands, you ought to see something totally different from these along the Maine coast. I have it!"

We will touch at Nantucket and all stay long enough for you to get an idea of the place, then you and Chandler can take the regular steamer back to Boston. He declares he cannot be away much longer from his feverish mill."

"It is a wonderfully kind and nice proposition," Jean Beverley cried, "and immensely fascinating. At this moment Nantucket certainly seems as remote and mysterious as the South Sea isles."

"It is much tamer, and there is nothing of a Conrad flavor about it, I assure you; but you know you are not after thrills, and the air there is conducive to relaxation."

Jean laughed at his teasing reference to her alleged pursuit of peace and quiet and then she grew pensive. "I suppose as I am already ninety-five per cent. revived, I ought to be looking up a relative who has her summer home near Bar Harbor; but my wardrobe is better fitted for a yachting trip than for her grand place

which is somewhere on one of these shore crags, I imagine," and she peered up a well-groomed driveway.

" That pretty sport suit you put on for climbing Bubbles will be just the thing for deck wear. Go back to your boarding-house and get your belongings, my dear, and return on the early mail-boat to-morrow, for the *Sea Gull* is to weigh anchor about ten o'clock. We Dennings can get our last properties on board by then; the people who have rented the cottage after us for August will take over what few provisions I leave, and Cousin Chandler has thoughtfully offered to stay at the hotel to-night so as to give me less house-keeping to wind up in the morning. Now please say you will make us happy by completing our quartette, friend Jean," and Mrs. Denning laid a coaxing hand upon the girl's.

The latter did not speak at once; her thoughts were too perplexed. There was her doubt as to whether it was in good

taste to accept so much from comparative strangers; her entirely feminine dread of unbecoming seasickness; and the realization, the result of her twenty-five years' experience, that in every old saying there is a grain of truth—then how about the adage “one cannot play with fire and not be burned”? She glanced at Webb's face; resolute now, it had looked jolly often and tender once; it might grow ardent. But she was not afraid. Fire did not always scorch; sometimes it was what one warmed one's heart at.

She turned swiftly to Mrs. Denning and gave that lady's fingers a little squeeze before she released her own, answering gaily:

“I should be ungrateful not to say, Yes, thank you! And I would so much rather be with you than with Great-aunt Mary!”

Details of the plan were then discussed by the two women who chattered amicably as to what to pack and what to leave out.

Mr. Denning, sidewise in his seat, now and then threw in a word of advice which was generally scouted. The man at the wheel seemed too absorbed to be listening, but when the automobile, whirling through the gay main street of Bar Harbor, turned off toward the locality where tent flags fluttered, and finally drew up at the Chautauqua entrance, he asked Jean tensely as he helped her from the car:

“ You really mean that—about going to Nantucket? ”

“ Yes,” as shortly.

Nodding with the manner of one highly pleased, he went a roundabout way to the platform while the other three took inconspicuous seats along the side aisle whence they could quickly get out to their machine.

These travelling Chautauquas have a \$4.98 thrill and charm of their own. Wholesome, patriotic, every performance gives a ticket-buyer more than his money’s worth. In two ways they satisfy the crav-

ing of all communities: to be in a tent, and to get a bargain. If one speaker falls below expectations, another rises above it, and the considerable talent engaged is wisely arranged with cumulative effect on the program.

The manager of the circuit covering this Bar Harbor week had felt anxious as to what manner of man the Rev. Thomas Denning had substituted to make the four-minute speech, but he ceased to worry after Chandler Webb's opening sentence. At Government's request he had taken part, before going overseas, in whirlwind campaigns and drives, and this practice had taught him to boil down his matter till, in his almost telegraphic brevity, every word like a bullet went straight to its mark. Furthermore, he had the gift of leadership; his tone alone could compel. Even his profit-sharing employees, though at this moment biting the hand that fed them, would probably not quite chew it to pieces, for

there was something about him which they both liked and respected.

To-day he had a new incentive to effectiveness. He wanted to bring to the face of the blue-eyed girl sitting between Tom and Emily that look she wore when it seemed as if she saw beyond what is to what might be.

* * * * *

The expression was there! He saw it when she and the Dennings joined him at the stage entrance; but jostling children, intent on getting to a rehearsal of the Junior Chautauqua's play, prevented conversation with her. Cousin Thomas clapped an approving pat on his shoulder with a "Capital, my boy, capital!" and Chandler tried to turn off further praise by saying jestingly, as he mopped his brow:

"It was capital *and labor*, rather. I should like that Jordan Pond ice-cream this minute!"

Quite as if it were a horse headed for its oats, the automobile sped over the road back to Seal Harbor and when they paused at the head of the wharf they were fortunate enough to hail a sailboat leaving for Islesford on which they could send Jean home. The car deposited the Dennings at their cottage and Webb reached out to the starter to take the machine to a garage and himself to the hotel, then he checked its wheels a second while he leaned out and beckoned Tom closer to him.

“Parson, what is that spiel about Elijah? Where was it he went?”

“The old prophet—why—he was carried up into heaven, Chan, but —”

Further particulars were not wanted evidently, the br-r-r of the released machinery cut them short; and Webb was still hugging the thought that Miss Beverley had by the Biblical allusion confessed to enjoyment of their Bubble trip despite its panicky episode, when he

walked into his hotel—and the clerk thought he had never seen such a pleasant-looking gentleman.

Perhaps it was well they had charged Jean Beverley to appear to them rain or shine the next morning, for that dawned unpropitiously with a heavy mist. On the mail launch the canvas hood had been put up to protect the few passengers; it effectually hid them from sight as the boat chug-chugged to the pier at Seal Harbor, and Webb had a moment's alarm lest his lady had failed him.

Then Jean stepped out; and in that queer way memory has, Chandler's darted back thirty years to a flower festival he had gone to as a child, where the fairy queen had come forth from her hiding in the heart of a great paper rose. And if this flattering likeness between Titania and Miss Beverley now came to him in spite of there being a prosaic reality of tarpaulin and gasoline in place of petals and fragrance, it only goes to show how a

business man's mind can work on occasions.

Her island experiences had taught Jean to alight agilely from a boat and it was her belongings rather than herself which she now put into the hands of the man who lifted his hat and hurried forward saying:

“I can't get anybody, even an old salt, to prophesy the day's probabilities, but no one will say it *isn't* going to clear off.”

“Then let's believe it *is*,” Jean replied, her voice as well as her eyes full of joyful anticipation. “Where is our boat?” She caught herself up and corrected, “Where is the Dennings' yacht?” But the delightful plural possessive pronoun had been said, and we all know that the spoken word comes not back.

“Out there to the left, beyond the steamer wharf. Tom and Emily are already on board and you and I are to be taken out to it.” And as their rowboat

drew near the *Sea Gull* they heard the parson calling cheerily:

“ Time and tide are all right if the weather isn’t.”

“ But this is the only kind of weather that makes it endurable to leave this region,” declared his wife who was at his side leaning over the deck railing to welcome the two now scrambling up on to the yacht. “ If it were a fair morning —” and her interrogative look sought Jean.

In response the girl’s bright face for an instant clouded; she was experiencing the pang which everybody feels at the thought of not being there to see Mt. Desert when next the mists roll away and its beauty stands revealed.

CHAPTER VII

FORTUNATELY the weather grew clearer and the run of the *Sea Gull* was pleasantly made without ups and downs, literal or figurative. As Webb said, with such a sea and sky it was difficult to picture the discoverers of America as needing commiseration, though doubtless the schoolboy voiced the feeling of many an old navigator when he stumblingly read, "Columbus was *cursing* along the shore."

The Dennings had ruefully but frankly told their guest that help was as scarce on water as on land and that they had been obliged to sail short of a regular cook; therefore the parson openly acted in that capacity, adjuring Webb, in the name of all true cousinship, to assist him at intervals in planking a fish or concocting a chowder; while his urgent calls up the companionway that it was time for the

salad-maker to appear caused his wife to report below for duty.

Jean Beverley kept observant eyes upon the routine of the yacht, hoping to see where she could slip in usefully, but she realized it was of all places not the one in which to keep underfoot, asking, "Can't I do something?" She was to be found on deck with sketching pad or sea poems in her lap, radiating a content which was such a contribution to the general good that she did not give the impression of being a drone in the hive; and her chance came on their last day out, when Mrs. Emily owned to a headache induced by the glare upon the ocean. Jean, tucking her hostess away in the only shady spot, descended to the galley and made a dessert. The Reverend Thomas, tasting it, called, "Author! Author!" Mrs. Denning then asked the recipe and Webb wished to know its name.

"You must be president of an Achievement Club in your town," one ejaculated.

"Your ancestors were surely Minute Men, you are so ready when needed," another declared; and as in "The Young Visiters" the "merry meal" went on till the Captain's announcement that Sankaty Light was in sight caused adjournment from the table to the bow, where they watched, through the approaching dusk, for the lights of Nantucket itself.

There they were: the vari-colored ones on the shipping in the harbor; those in shops and hotels at the town's centre, and rows of lights where summer cottages climbed the cliff or went off toward the south shore.

"I feel that this is the long-sought land of doing nothing, seeing nothing, lacking nothing. Must I go ashore and visit the sights?" said Jean drowsily.

Mr. Denning smiled indulgently. "Have you come to believe that the only way to find an island restful is to lie in a steamer chair and gaze at it?"

But his wife answered firmly, "I seem

to have the family conscience in my keeping just as present. Of course we do the place to-morrow in real tourist fashion, although I imagine that is just the way it should not be done; isn't that so, Tom? You are the only one of us who has been here before."

He gave an emphatic nod. "Great pity we have to rush it. Nantucket isn't north of Boston and consequently it is free from high blood pressure and high work pressure, and it ought not to be stamped by a travelling horde. It looks bigger than it is because every public building is so placed as to make a feature in the picture. You really will have time in which to reconnoitre and select what places you want to come back to, to linger in; that is, a day will let you stroll around enough, provided you begin in good season. And if it is early to rise to-morrow, it is early to bed for me now. Chan, if you and Miss Beverley choose to spoil your youth and beauty by late hours, remember

a damp rises off the water and get out those extra rugs we keep inside the cabin door. Come, Millie, a good sleep will be the best cure for your headache. Don't you know," he added in a rather fierce whisper as he picked up her knitting and drew her away beside him, "that there is nothing like a steamer deck to sprout, ripen, and harvest an attachment?"

"Yes, Thomas, I remember," Emily Denning replied meekly, and the pair disappeared, snickering in the comradeship with which the years had blessed them.

At their going Jean Beverley had risen somewhat precipitately. Hitherto on the trip there had not been much but general conversation, but the scene was now being set for a tête-à-tête. "I ought to go below, too, for I have neglected the very friend to whose suggestion I owe this pilgrimage, and now I am trying to make amends by writing her a diary-letter. It will take all this evening to bring it up to date."

"Don't seal and send it yet;" Webb spoke in a tone which at first arrested her flight and then hastened it, so that she was down the first step to the cabin before he concluded rather lamely, "There will be Nantucket to tell her about, I mean."

It was easier to talk of getting an early start than to make one the next morning, and by the time the Dennings and their company had been rowed to land, it was bathing hour on the island and the tide of humanity was setting toward the beach where a band was playing gaily; and the quartette from the yacht joined the irregular procession with its holiday air.

"Fancy being where the ocean is warm enough to tempt one! Do you want to go in?" asked Emily Denning.

Jean shook her head. "I would rather look at the kaleidoscopic scene."

The Reverend Thomas was sighting a trifle longingly the quiet water out beyond the breakers. "We could rent some suits,

Chan. Come have a swim. I'm built so I can float finely, too."

"All right. I'll be with you in a jiffy. Hold my watch and pocketbook, will you, please, Miss Beverley? Sorry you won't be a mermaid and 'comb your golden hair.' "

Left to themselves the ladies fell into one of those silences which Jean was wont to call uniting. Once in a while they glanced at each other in enjoyment of some charming child or some homely freak who in bathing dress crossed their line of vision. Now and then out of the hundred varying shades of sweaters one struck the eye as especially pretty and Jean inquired, "Is it coral?" or Mrs. Denning said, "That must be the new blue one hears about."

Once or twice there was a ripple of excitement as an acquaintance from some part of the United States passed, recognized Mrs. Denning, and turned back to chat, avowing an allegiance to the island

which drew them to it every year. There was the briny odor to enjoy; the sparkling sunlight; the wet sands added their delicate color to the play of tints where the seaweed caught the glow; the shallows reflected the blue sky, and within sight was the lush green of the marshes. Before a moment had begun to drag, their two men ran by, dripping, to the bath-houses, to emerge shortly in the pink of condition and in high spirits; ready, they declared, for an early dinner.

“ And let it be at the hotel, too. I feel I need two soups, beef with a side of lamb, all the entrées, several salads, and more than one dessert. Save me from ordering all this, Emily, for I should not have money left to tip the waiter adequately,” Tom Denning joked.

“ What will be the thing to do to help digest this meal? ” Webb thought it advisable to inquire. “ Take the trip to ‘Sconset? I herewith invite you three to motor over there.” As he spoke he was bending

over Jean to receive back the valuables she had been keeping for him—"in regular wifely fashion," the thought intruded, and her usually clear, direct eyes fell and her cheeks burned under their coat of tan. "Were we gone a tedious time? Did you get forty winks on the sand?" he asked considerately.

The absurdity of the question made her laugh and drove away her self-consciousness. "Why, it has been moving pictures and vaudeville and an art-gallery combined," she replied. "To be sure, before we realized how entertaining every minute would be we were inclining to a nap, or rather reclining, but some friends of Mrs. Denning ran across us, almost literally, for we were snuggled down behind a dune, and not only did they rouse us but, worse yet, they insisted on leaving the morning paper for us. Do you want to see it, Mr. Webb?"

"Indeed I do not. Look at the headlines and tell me if I ought to."

“ ‘ Labor World has a Quiet Breathing Spell,’ ” read Jean. “ ‘ Further Strikes Probably Averted.’ ”

Chandler Webb threw up his hat like a happy boy. “ Hooray! Forty-eight hours more holiday for me, then! Oh, I say! Dinner won’t be served just yet and this old Museum looks worth a visit.”

“ You poor commercialized Philistine!” the parson cried, “ not to know that it is one of the best places of its kind anywhere. It has a whale which almost persuades one of the truth of the Jonah story. No dodging this Museum, Emily.”

Miss Beverley, too, evinced little desire to view anything indoors but later on they all emerged unwillingly and Mrs. Denning tacitly confessed her interest in what they had seen by an innocent look up at her husband and an earnest, “ What else can you take us to see? ”

He gave her an amused glance and is-

sued the command, " Hotel dining-room, right about face! Excuse my militarism, but I lived so long at Camp Devens. If we hurry we may be able to deploy through Quince Lane, skirmish round the old church, scout about town, and manoeuvre so as to see the inside of the Captains' House. We shall want the remainder of our shore-leave for the bluff, after we get back from 'Sconset. It will not take so long to go the seven miles as it did when I went over on the funny little railroad with a funny little locomotive which seemed to need cranking every few minutes."

Except to call the ex-chaplain's attention to the fact that he was mixing the army and the navy in his remarks, the others made no objection to his plans. They found, however, that it took the greater part of the afternoon for the trip to Siasconset, and even though they did not speed across the moors, they could hardly see and much less stop to pick the

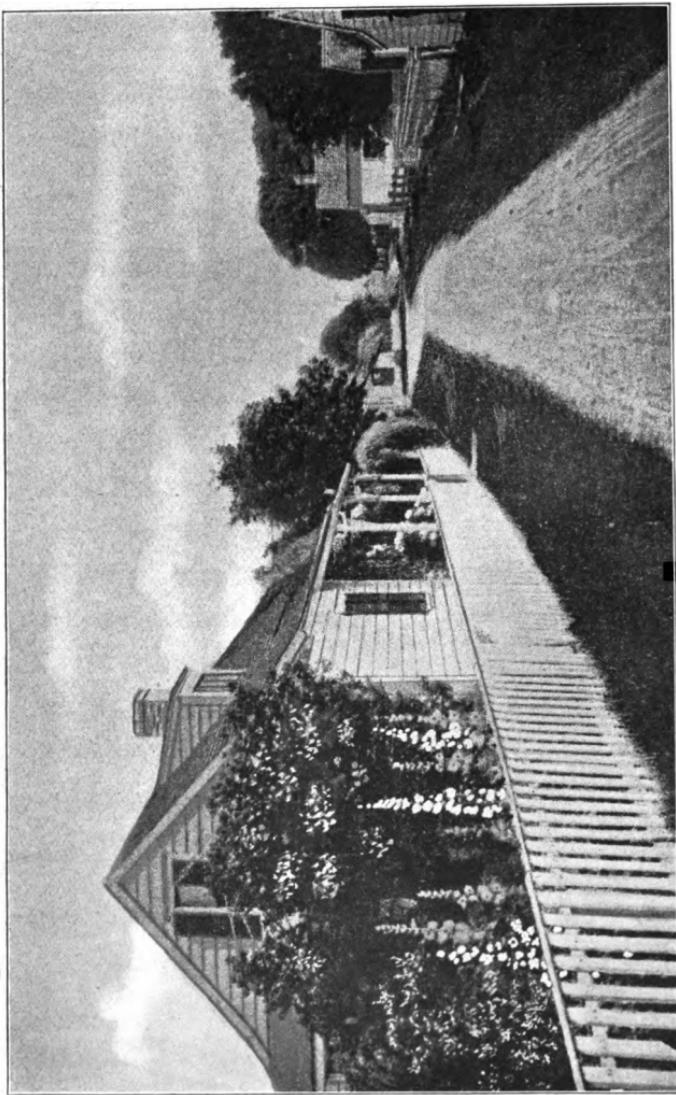
berries, the grasses, and the flowers which enamelled the far-reaching old sheep-commons.

While motoring swiftly along Mrs. Denning and Miss Beverley had to be content with sweeping effects, with the broad washes of color in the scene, but once alighted at their destination on the 'Sconset bluff, they were not to be put off from revelling in the artistic possibilities of the fishermen's diminutive cottages, and their escorts stood tolerantly by while they discussed which one they would like to buy for a bungalow, whether ramblers or clematis should veil the porch and over-spread the roof, and what would be best at the windows.

"They are of such doll-house size I should say muslin rather than chintz," Jean reasoned with engaging seriousness; "and we could get our brightening touches from flowers in window-boxes."

"Why not have a big establishment, Miss Jean, while you are romancing?"

QUAINT 'SCONSET.



the minister quizzed. "Isn't every fair American a princess with dreams?"

It may have been because there was rushing in upon her memory that day on Little Cranberry when she and Chandler Webb had idled at the Pretend House that she could not now include him in her regard; she was aware he was listening for her reply to Mr. Denning, but under the circumstances she did not propose to reveal whether she really coveted a large share of this world's goods, and therefore she answered evasively something about finding any dwelling desirable, large or small, provided it had no resemblance to her boarding-place; and she welcomed the diversion caused by Mrs. Denning's espying one of the dwarf cottages which had already been diverted from its original use.

"See! it has been turned into a Tea Room. I treat forthwith to something hot or cold, as you prefer; that is, I will if we may tarry long enough to eat and drink,

Chandler? Is the car taken by the hour or by the trip?"

"It is always worth a lot to see you pour tea, Cousin Emily," Webb answered gallantly. "Can you enter that tiny portal, Thomas?"

Tea rooms have a happy faculty of seeming each one prettier than the last, and this which the four patrons now almost filled reproduced cleverly a ship's cabin. "The trouble is that while it looks like the *Gull*, it looks cleaner," demurred Mrs. Denning, as she handed about the dainty cups, and a Little Buttercup of a waitress passed sandwiches and a spicy conserve which smacked of foreign parts.

"As you said, there certainly is no *urge* in this air," Jean commented, "and one can risk the stimulus of a second cup —thank you!" Sipping it she crossed to the window and stood looking over towards Europe. The tide was coming full, and superb, streaming combers made white lines on an ocean which under an open and

shut sky varied from black through purple to sapphire and tourmaline. "Oh, isn't it heavenly wide and free and southern! I have a don't-want-to-go-home feeling. Is it laziness or content—this satisfied sensation?"

"Neither diagnosis seems to me to cover the matter, Miss Jean."

She was putting on her hat before a mirror at the moment and she caught reflected in it the husband's twinkle at his wife as he spoke. Jean suddenly frowned; she *had* been looking absurdly happy. Did the Dennings think—well, they mustn't; and with dignity she said:

"Am I the only one who realizes that we must be going, if we are to climb the cliff slowly enough for ——"

"Slowly enough for a globular person? Say it, Miss Jean, say it! I don't blame you for getting back at me."

But Webb kept the automobile to carry them all up the long hill and there dis-

missed it that they might stroll down when the spirit moved. The only one to find any fault with the place was the one who had known it years before. "It is too civilized here with these architectural gems planted up and down the road. I am going back to the cemetery where things may seem as they used to, though I suppose that, too, has grown more populous. Even the town crier is dead and buried, and *that's* the commonplace way they announce things nowadays." He pointed to a big bulletin-board. "Great Scott! It's an advertisement of a Lawn Party for the benefit of the local church. *What* prompted me to turn my eyes in that direction?"

"But now that you did see it, Thomas, we shall have to go and buy a perfectly useless article. Miss Beverley can purchase anything or nothing, but as a minister's wife I shall have to take what nobody else wants."

That besides meekness she had also wis-

dom, Mrs. Denning proved when they had dutifully sought the different booths and she craftily made her selection. "Another paper-weight; yes, Tom, it is. But they warned me it is of unbaked clay and therefore liable to crumble to pieces soon —so I took it! Meanwhile, during its brief existence, it is an appropriate souvenir, for it's in the shape of a hull. Chandler, don't let her sell you that; it's a boudoir cap. What," amazedly, "would you do with it?"

Webb dropped the lacy trifle which he had been fingering with no more thought about his shopping than he had given to buying a peasant's cap in Holland. It was Denning rather than himself who found voice. "I once knew a man who bought a pair of shoestrings, thinking time would bring him shoes."

He spoke apparently apropos of nothing, but his seeming irrelevance deceived nobody, and Chandler Webb stalked with perceptible wrath and color away from

the needlework table to one where the articles seemed to have no gender.

"Guess this is more in my line," he brought out brusquely, taking up a guide-book of Nantucket. "We can pore over it to-night and see what we have omitted in our rounds. We must sugar-coat our travel study, though," and he added boxes of candy to their parcels.

But after they had been rowed back to the yacht, had freshened themselves as to tresses and dresses, had eaten a homelike supper in a homelike way and resorted to the deck for their last evening there, they did not use the waning light to examine the guide-book. Instead, as the men got out their pipes and the ladies luxuriously selected their favorite bonbons, the talk eddied about topics connected with what they had been seeing together.

"Quite a contrast between Rockefeller's house at Seal Harbor and the fisherman's at 'Sconset," observed the minister, puffing meditatively. "Seems to me

I have heard something about love in a cottage, but why not in a bath-with-every-room place, too, eh, Millie?"

His wife smiled sagaciously. "I should say it was more likely to *rush* into a cottage but to *abide* in something more comfortable. Still — one can never tell —"

"No; think of the Carleton Parkers and their 'American Idyll.' Many waters of hard experience did not quench their affection for each other. Have you any ideas on the subject, Miss Beverley?" replied the Reverend Thomas, pursuing what he proudly thought was a subtle means to bring about an end.

"Perhaps," she answered, from a shadowed nook, and as always when she spoke, the low-pitched voice and unslurred words riveted attention although she might contribute nothing of great weight to the conversation, "perhaps it might be anywhere if only it were kept from being crowded out by a multiplicity

of other things. It seems to me like a flower jostled by the rank weeds which are the material cares of every-day life—the fisherman's need of bread and butter, the millionaire's absorption in promoting or being promoted."

"In short, love would be well-fixed on a restful island," laughed Mr. Denning. "There you go again after your will-o'-the-wisp. I like your faithfulness to an idea."

"You are making fun of me." Jean was entirely unruffled; "but I shall find that earthly paradise yet, and send you a post-card of it," she added lightly, willing to fend off more probing.

Chandler Webb had not lost what the others were saying, but he was not one to be challenged to stand and deliver his inmost thoughts; therefore he now flicked the leaves of the guide-book he was holding and said unsentimentally:

"There is nothing new under the sun of course and here are tales of strikes—

only they were called mutinies. Here is mention of a famous one; wonder how the Captain dealt with the case;" and the captain of industry peered at the fine print, unheedful for the moment of anything but his own immediate practical problem. Finally he tossed aside the volume and turned rather combatively to Jean Beverley.

"Islands are very well; Atlantis and the Hesperides and other places of fabulous delights were islands, I know; but it's the *seeking* them which appeals to me. Here's this one," and he reached again for the fat guide-book, "Nantucket. Mapped and owned; put between two covers; nothing to discover. Now my preference finds expression in Towne's verse:

"'I like a road that wanders straight; the
King's highway is fair,
And lovely are the sheltered lanes that take
you here and there;
But best of all I love a road that leads to
God knows where.'

“ Does that sentiment appeal to any one else here? ”

Three hands were immediately raised.

“ Well, then, in the name of common sense, why do people, when everybody likes to be a gypsy, a beloved vagabond, why does every one stick to ruts and beaten tracks? You wouldn’t start out of them if you could,” and his pipe was rapped smartly on the railing.

“ I would, too! ” cried Jean resentfully; “ I’d thank you to remember that I adventurously left my home with what were pretty nearly sealed orders from Marie White.”—Oh, it was absurd to be provoked with him, recalling the humors of their meeting and the subsequent hours of close companionship. She broke off with an irrepressible note of amusement; then, in an altered tone, she went on to say gravely and simply:

“ What if one is not able to listen to the call of the open road? I haven’t been. I have had to abide by things whether I

liked them or not; and my chapter for the day has often been to take down Jean Ingelow's poems and lay to heart her:

“ ‘Though it be a grand and comely thing
To be unhappy—(and we think it is,
Because so many grand and clever folk
Have found out reasons for unhappiness,
And talked about uncomfortable things,—
Low motives, bores, and shams, and hollow-
ness,
The hollowness o’ the world, till we at last
Have scarcely dared to jump or stamp, for
fear
Being so hollow, it should break some day,
And let us in),—yet, since we are not grand,
Oh, not at all, and as for cleverness,
That may be or may not be,—it is well
For us to be as happy as we can!’ ”

Out of an appreciative silence the minister spoke. “ Do you mind if we go to write my next sermon while the spell is on? If I undertake to announce that my text is from Jean Ingelow, I won’t guarantee that I shall not say Jean Beverley instead.”

Unobserved he gave his wife's arm a compelling pressure and she followed him within, excusing herself as one often subject to this summons to act as pastor's assistant.

Webb appeared oblivious of their good-nights. Jean, her chair an arm's-length from his, held her breath lest she should, by even so much as a bird's movement, seem to call back his attention to herself. It had never left her, probably; for when he spoke it was to ask:

“How long have I known you?”

“Do you mean in this incarnation?”

Jean parried.

He shook his head impatiently. “That doctrine does not appeal to me. I do not care to come back to earth as a Chinese baby or an Esquimaux beau. Why,” and his tone deepened, “I would rather, when I get over there” (he jerked his pipe toward where the light lingered in a splendid west) “return to being my beautiful little mother's naughty boy than be rein-

carnated as President of a League of Nations.”

He was speaking ardently, but almost as if to a second self, and Jean Beverley, aware he was showing her a side rarely revealed, sat understandingly silent. But how she wanted to stretch out her hand to the lonely child in him! At last he resumed, his thoughts evidently having gone in a circle back to the lines she had just quoted:

“ Well, I know you a lot more—a whole year’s worth more, I think, since you said that poem and I heard the scorn in your voice about ‘low motives, bores, and shams,’” (“What about the despising in his own voice?” Jean exulted) “and as for being as happy as one can—I wish I could make you happier.”

“ All my friends do that,” Miss Beverley said primly, after a moment so tense that the striking of the town clock sounding over the water startled them both.

“ Did you count the hour?” one asked

nervously, and the other replied with an effort at casualness:

“Eleven, was it? Let me see, Tom and Emily go on to New York from here for a visit, and you and I take the morning boat to Boston?”

“The *early* morning boat,” she corrected. “That reminds me I must go and pack.”

The conversation certainly was not getting him far on the path upon which he was bent. How was it he always blundered into mentioning something which took her from him? He must seize —

But there seemed nothing to seize except the steamer rug which she was holding out for him to fold. She took this time to vanish; but he called softly, using Mrs. Denning’s pet name for her and adding a droll little quirk of his own:

“Pleasant dreams, friend Jean dear.”

CHAPTER VIII

THREE is much written about the sensations attaching to occasions of parting, but in reality they are times calculated to dampen the emotions. To get up, to get ready, to get off, to say the proper things, bestow the proper tips, to give the home address with appropriate cordial remarks—all this crowds out that tender aside one meant to say.

These were the sentiments of Chandler Webb on the following morning, as he stood watching the Captain with his man-of-all-work who constituted the crew prepare to row to another wharf the two who were to connect with the *Sankaty*. To be sure, he was not to part immediately with Miss Beverley, Webb reflected comfortably, only with his cousins; and once aboard the Boston boat he would have the opportunity he coveted of coming to con-

clusions with Jean. A good sailor himself, he did not notice that the ocean was rougher than on any previous day; but Miss Beverley, hatted and veiled, about to step down into the dingy, observed with dismay how it was tossing.

She managed, however, when it came the moment for her to give her hand into the Captain's steadyng one, to smile brightly up at the couple left on deck and to say, at the dictate of genuine affection:

“Good-bye, you dear, dear Dennings! This trip has been the climax to my quest. I shall always think of the *Sea Gull* as a kind of floating island!”

“It has certainly been an escape for the tired business man,” Webb supplemented; “I expect the office force will comment on my exceeding fatness and beauty when I walk in on them to-morrow.”

The Captain, having an urgent errand on shore connected with a leaking valve which he was impatient to put into a re-

pairer's hand, now cut short further adieu and made quick time through the faint fog which at that unconscionable hour had not begun to think of blowing out to sea.

When it was useless to wave longer after those departing, Mr. and Mrs. Denning turned from the rail and exchanged a rather guilty glance. Mrs. Emily sought to make this less evident by saying casually:

"Such a nice girl! I hope we shall see her again;" but the parson gave her another telltale look and remarked oracularly, "I doubt if we ever see *Miss Beverley* again."

Even the sizable steamer was not in equilibrium this morning and when Jean found that the trip would be filled with discomfort, she realized that she had been anticipating it with uncommon delight. But it seemed there was to be no promenading, no going to the prow, no continuance of sunlit hours on summer seas; in-

stead she must sit in the quietest spot and keep dull eyes fixed at a distant point far above the waves. From Nantucket to Martha's Vineyard is not long, but it is deep, and the cubic contents between are susceptible of great commotion.

The few passengers who remained in evidence watched Webb revolve around Miss Beverley's chair, and the girl dusting the periodical booth marvelled that any lady could be so oblivious to the attractions of such a gentleman. He was not trying to charm, however, merely to make comfortable. He even sought to offer mental diversion and started a mock debate: Is an island worth coming to? But after Jean had nodded as much as to say that surprising though it might seem with Neptune giving her such a rough passage, she wished to take the affirmative side of the question, the topic languished and she became once more rigid and silent.

The next time he swung around to her

sheltered corner he had the air of one seized with a happy inspiration. "I will get off at the Vineyard and see if I cannot find some fruit to tempt you."

"Oh, how kind he is and how little he knows!" thought Jean, to whom the idea of eating did not appeal; "but he ought not to be tied to my chair all the trip," and her brief reply was so amiably worded that he took it to mean approval of his suggestion.

She was really somewhat relieved to have him raise his hat and leave, and while the stevedores briskly got freight in and out of the hold she relaxed and dozed a little, waking in a less qualmish condition and rejoicing to find the wind abated. She made a short search for Mr. Webb to speak to him of these improvements, but he was nowhere visible and she concluded that when he returned he had seen her eyes shut, and thinking her asleep had gone to take a smoke or to indulge a masculine propensity for studying mechanism.

But his absence could not long be thus easily explained. Not only was she unable to find him, but no reassuring message arrived. The purser, questioned, took the matter without due seriousness and Miss Beverley, though not losing her outward serenity, went back to her seat to worry.

As the minutes dragged along, anxiety gave way to indignation; indignation at Marianna, who had vouched that islands were restful—and had they not been continuously exciting? At the Dennings, who had given her to understand she would be relieved of all care with their cousin for her travelling companion. Almost indignation at Webb himself, for although she had been poor company, had she been so uninteresting as to justify this desertion?

There was a chance which she clung to that some word might reach her between Wood's Hole and Boston, but her train pulled into the South Station without her

having received any. She passed out at the gate with her thoughts racing. "Is there another boat train in soon?" The official replied, "Yes, by early afternoon." It was necessary to settle quickly upon her further movements, and decide momently she did, although she admitted to herself merely that she would not leave the waiting-room *quite yet*.

Her actions spoke more plainly at noon, when she would have sought the tea and toast which the unhappily sea-tossed person always orders, except that she did not wish to seclude herself in the café where she could neither see nor be seen; instead she bought something cold and ate it sitting where she could continue to watch the clock and the arriving throngs.

Whether to mourn Webb as dead or spurn him as recalcitrant? That was the question; but before she ceased to waver in her mind, he came. She had an opportunity to observe him before he perceived her; cross and hot, hurried and rumpled

and ocean-burned, he was not a figure of romance.

She tried to look like an accusing angel but her own appearance was too travel-worn for the rôle and, anyway, how could she severely refuse to notice that his hand was eagerly outstretched, freed from the overcoat and luggage which he had tossed to porters, one of whom would have declared he overheard, "Good girl!" while the other would have asserted the exclamation was, "My girl!" Why not? For Chandler Webb said both.

"I got left," he confessed straightway. "Now don't tell me that if I miss a boat I am not fit to run a business or—or you. I'm *not fit*," and he glared about at the hurrying hundreds as if hating them for preventing him from enlarging then and there upon the subject nearest his heart. "But truly, I am not such an idiot as I seem, Jean. I hunted fruit from one vendor to another and of course the shop where I finally found some good enough

to buy was the last one on the street. All the change I had was some Canadian silver I had got at Mt. Desert, where they take it because the Provinces are next door but this Vineyard Greek would not accept it and went scurrying round to get small bills for my ten. If I had heard the *Sankaty* give its warning whistle of 'All aboard!' I would have left my purse on his old counter rather than have had the steamboat go on without me—leaving you to have a fine opinion of your escort. O Lord! the mere thought of it — Then I tried to wire you but nobody would promise telegram delivery on a train, all such conveniences for the public having been thoughtfully done away with by the latest walk-out of strikers. Jean—I'm mad all through! Can you love me?"

An influx of suburbanites swept them from their moorings and the invasion gave Jean time to catch her breath and to bring out the non-committal words, " You need a guardian."

"Yes, of course," he assented rapidly, "but will you be it? Don't play with me, honey. You would not have waited here if you had not cared a bit. Come along to where I can hear your answer. If I had not found you when I did, I was desperate and daffy enough to have gone to the Inquiry Bureau and asked, 'Is there a lovely girl here looking for me?'"

"Hush-h-h! My—my great-grandmother would not have felt it was—nice, to wait for a man this way," was the stammered reply as orphaned Jean, with justifiable pride in her family descent, strove not to forget the influence of her careful early bringing-up.

Webb laughed, the lines relaxing in his face. "Child, does a twentieth-century man want an eighteenth-century wife? Do you fancy I don't know that you are that maidenly and modest ancestress only with modern improvements?"

They had found a comparatively quiet spot in front of one of those ticket win-

dows which are never opened, and he was speaking very soberly now. The porters hovering afar off where his gesture had bade them remain, agreed that at this juncture the man took and held the woman's hand. "I'm sure," he pleaded, "that that forebear of yours was brave, dear, years ago—will you be now?"

Instead of whispering, Jean Beverley might as well have shouted her answer, for it caused Webb to turn a divulgingly beaming face toward the porters as he bade them call a taxi-cab.

"She's took him!" was the remark as the speaker pocketed a tip which evoked rosy possibilities of all the drinks on the legalized list. His companion was about to return a cheerful wink when his eyes, which had not been delicately withdrawn from staring in at the window of the cab, showed surprise. "Say, that gent ought to join the movies. Here he was looking as if he'd found the plum in the puddin', and now he's looking as if he'd burnt his

fingers. His face *registers* all right, don't it?"

The fellow was correct in thinking that Webb's expression had changed. The moment the lover had imagined they were secluded from the world, he had given—and taken—the one due and inevitable kiss. Then he had forced himself to settle back in his corner of the taxi, but not without a protesting:

"Pretty poor use to put a mouth to, just to talk with. But, sweetheart, I haven't much time to tell you my scheme, for the driver will be starting for the North Station and—I want to tell him—to go instead to a minister's. There is always an old Harvard classmate who has become a clergyman and who can be got at in an emergency like this." Then his wits came back to him and he cried in accents for all the world like a grieved and spoiled child's:

"Oh, Jean! We can't be married for five days! I forgot that recent law re-

quiring people to file their intentions in advance. Great Scott! I could have filed mine right after I first met you."

The lady of his love was looking at him steadfastly. She fully realized she was at a turning point in her life, but she knew herself rather well, and she counted on Jean Beverley not to do anything in haste to repent it at leisure. She had no shadow of doubt that her feeling for the man beside her would be as lasting as it was intense; therefore she spared him a conventional coquettish rejection of his precipitous plan, a pretended reluctance at his haste, and sat there with the dearest look of confidence in her blue eyes and a low murmur of happiness escaping her lips.

"Boy dear, I'm alone in the world and there are no insurmountable reasons why I could not be married right away; but you—remember your sister; and I feel sure you have lifelong friends who deserve —"

"I have! A goodly fellowship," he

agreed with hearty gratitude; “ but whose wedding is this, theirs or ours? Jean, I am afraid to let you out of my sight. Will you promise to come down to Boston on the third of those confounded days to lunch with me, and you shall have the wedding journey arranged and I will have the ideas for our future home to submit to you? There would be time for Cousin Tom to come on from New York to officiate; but, wife-to-be, what about surprising our relatives and not cutting short the Dennings’ visit in New York? As for Marcia, we do not want to have a real society affair, do we? And the minute bustling Marlie gets to anything, it becomes a function; the reporters seem to have a form set up saying, ‘ Mrs. Cabot Vining was present and wore, etc., etc.’ I say, dear, do you want me to come to your town to marry you? Would your friend, Marie White, see to everything for you? Cross your pretty white neck and tell me true.”

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“ There is nothing rose-colored about where I board, and I am not sure the Whites are at home just at present,” Jean replied; “ Marianna might not be available as a maid-of-honor,” hesitating a little over the portentous word, “ so I would be suited as well with Boston. But I don’t feel quite easy in regard to your relatives; I should think you would like to have your own about you on such an occasion—Chandler? ”

That was the first time he had heard her speak his name and the effect was to make her so increasingly suffice him that he answered reprovingly, and as if he found her lacking in a due sense of the situation, “ I should have you.”

The clock on the North Station was in sight and as she read its hands Jean returned to earth. “ I can just catch a train which will be standing on track 16,” she cried. “ Yes, I will come back! I will!”

The result of their meeting on that third day following, when they talked absorb-

edly over the Touraine dining-table and later bent their heads close together in its library over railroad time-tables and architect's drawings, was that they met again on the fifth morning, this time in the parlor of a Back Bay minister. The room was in its summer linen coverings and Jean Beverley always felt as if she had been married on a cool island in the sweltering city.

Is any one supposing that Chandler Webb contented himself with that one lunch-time sight of his fiancée during the days which elapsed between their betrothal and their wedding? Quite the contrary: he had hastened to investigate the conditions obtaining in his mill, and had provided relief for the trusty men who, as it were, had been holding down the lid of a seething caldron; with the same forcefulness he had got the refusal of desirable lots and houses and secured his marriage license; then he had raced his car up over the state road to New Hamp-

shire and carried Jean off from her boarding-house for a drive on which they made merry comparing the congratulatory replies to the announcement of their engagement.

There was a telegram to Webb which read:

“ Always knew you could do it if you tried.
“ Tom.”

From Mr. and Mrs. Denning to Jean, who had no relatives of her own, there was a letter overflowing with cousinliness; one would not have thought those affectionate pages could be from a lady who was called a person of extreme reserve; but one would have said it was quite like the parson to write that he had seen this attack coming on and had wanted to help them get it over before they left Nantucket.

To both Chandler and Jean a message of satisfaction from Mrs. Vining regarding what she evidently considered was the

result of her famous executive ability when put forth along the line of match-making.

A dispatch to Jean, who on finding Dr. White's family away as she had feared she might, had wired them, "Can I have your island for honeymoon? Letter to follow;" and who now had this answer to show from Marianna:

"Will open and stock it, and leave as you arrive."

"She knows I never ran any kitchen except a Diet one," said Jean ruefully.

"And I never cooked anything except steak and onions for a stag party," owned Chandler; and simultaneously, in mock dismay:

"Are you scared?"

"Willing to risk it?" followed by something which is nothing if not simultaneous.

CHAPTER IX

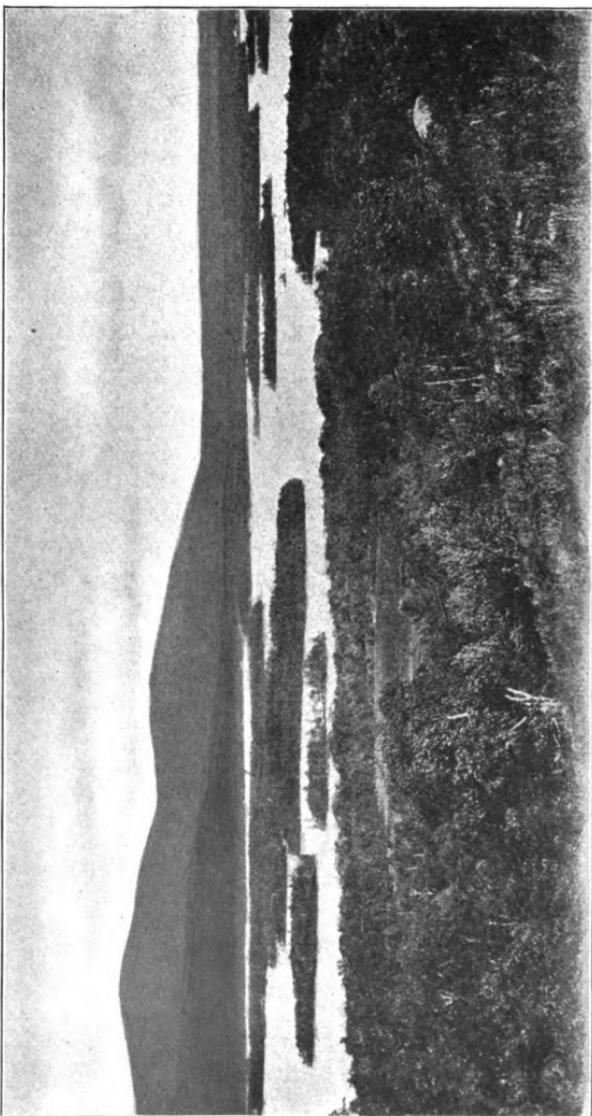
BECAUSE of the Whites' unqualifiedly hospitable offer, repeated in a second telegram and an urgent note, the two who had been made one at the Boston parsonage stepped, during the early afternoon, from the White Mountain express on to the station platform at Ashland; and there Marie was easily recognizable as a fairy godmother although instead of waving a wand she handed over the key to Camp Lorelei.

She chatted vivaciously, being of the type which does that when excited, and they punctuated her monologue with, "Thank you;" "You're awfully kind;" "You seem to have thought of all imaginable needs of ours." But her last word was, like a postscript, the most important thing of all.

"Joey—he is the boy who will meet you

with his little launch—is to bring you milk every day from the mainland, and mornings you can row over to his father's farm for berries and vegetables—and I guess that makes everything I ought to speak to you about. You will find Lorelei tiny, Mr. Webb, but restful; *islands always are;*" and as she boarded the down train and sounds of hilarity floated after her, she wondered what she had said that was so funny.

Doubtless Sunapee has its especial charm as a lake—one likes it; Winnepe-saukee is surely great and glorious—one admires it; but undeniably Asquam is the gem—one loves it. At the wharf where terminates the road bringing passengers from Ashland, Joey was waiting for Mr. and Mrs. Webb, and his boat took them faster than they desired across Little Squam, then through the narrows out into picturesque Big Squam, and over to its far side near which lay the island of their hearts' desire.



SQUAM LAKE AND RED HILL.

The boy delivered last information as he showed them how to effect a skilful landing on their diminutive beach, for the formality of a wharf was dispensed with.

"Miss White's had ma helping get the Camp victualled up. Miss White she says she couldn't keep house without us. She's got a megaphone to call me; my room's on the side of our house toward Lorely. But I s'pose you won't be scairt;" and Joey chugged away with a last admiring look at Webb's muscular frame.

"No, we're not afraid;" and the two who were marooned smiled into each other's eyes, and Jean caught her husband back with a passionate little movement which he did not at all understand but which he loved her for, before she let him put the key in the door.

The outside of the camp house was entirely in harmony with its charming environment and the moment one stepped within one saw that the same taste had dealt with all minor details.

"Mighty cunning kingdom," pronounced the new ruler of it.

"Isn't it?" exulted his consort. "But everything is so dainty that I fear I shall not leave the place looking as I found it," was her afterthought, in the perturbation of a new housekeeper.

"Don't talk of leaving this pocket paradise. What a trump your friend Marie is! Behold that banquet awaiting us! A city caterer isn't in it! Do you need some kindling, ma'am?" and Webb, who was accustomed to pressing electric buttons to get what he wanted, prepared to go pick up sticks.

"Not to-night, thank you, for the fire is laid in the stove as well as in the fireplace. See that darling refrigerator with ice actually in it! Here is a filled thermos bottle, too, if you prefer a hot drink; I'll see if it is tea or coffee," rippled Jean who had been peeping here and there, tiptoeing as if their happiness were something which must not be rudely

awakened. "Let us have supper and hurry out for the sunset, Channie."

"You think you must see Old Sol tucked up in his clouds every night, don't you, honey?" teased Webb; "but *I* have no objection to eating."

They did not hasten through the meal, however; they could not. For this bridal feast, Joey's mother had used every delectable recipe for which she was noted, so that the mere serving of the dishes and the gathering up of the remaining seven basketfuls to put thriftily away required all the time till the colors had faded in the sky.

It was dusk therefore when they sought the one big rock and climbed it, and a silver crescent hung in the west. Chandler Webb eyed this with favor. "You are well-timed up there. Wife, we must watch the moon at Amalfi and Marken and Bermuda before we are much older."

"England's an island, too; what is the

matter with that? I have a date there in a few years with the nicest boy;" and Jean, like the ladye in the ballade, glanced sidewise and looked down.

Webb held her off and wrinkled his brows as if studying a problem which must be settled at once. "Which do I like you better—sweet or saucy? By the way, what do you think of islands as a rest cure?"

"Not a success," Jean made answer laughingly. "Still, they cannot be excelled as a remedy for a rather drab existence and for—loneliness." She let her cheek brush his for a second, and because she found it difficult not to be prodigal of emotion she resolutely now checked her demonstrativeness and began playfully to parody:

"The isles I knew, dear heart, with thee,
Are as a string of pearls to me;
Each isle a pearl,
Each pearl a prayer,
Until I reach the end ——"

and there her voice broke; but as it faltered, her mate struck in with the words:

“A ring is hung!”

his bass trying to reach the high note required.

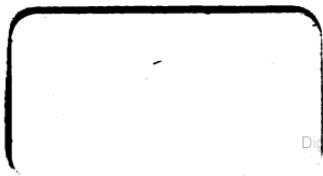
He had contrived to make her smile instead of weep, however, and with, “We are two silly children,” she sprang up gaily and began to collect their cushions.

“We are a happy man and woman, thank God!” Chandler amended, taking her load from her. “But why,” he urged, “do you dear women indulge in sentimental songs when you can have genuine, unshrinkable, unfadeable, man-sized, belonging-to-the-union love?”

He dropped his raillery, for they had passed down from the rock, through the trees where the birds were already in their nests, and had come to the pretty Dutch door. He stepped within, tossing away the pillows with which he was laden and held out his arms.

“Don’t stand there on the outside of our threshold, Jean Beverley Webb, looking as if you saw visions. I see them, too! Come, beloved, come *here!*”

THE END



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